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MASTER RACE

MASTER RACE

by

KEITH BOTSFORD



LONDON

ALLAN WINGATE

*Towards Debts
of
Generosity and Kindness
to
MRS. D.N.H.
and
G.D.D.*

*Let the Hero's Face bear Witness
to the Memory of
R.W.S.*

Conquered countries are, generally speaking, degenerated from their original institution. Corruption has crept in, the execution of the laws has been neglected, and the government has grown oppressive. Who can question but such a state would be a gainer, and derive some advantages from the very conquest itself, if it did not prove destructive? When a government has arrived at that degree of corruption, as to be incapable of reforming itself, it would not lose much by being newly moulded. . . . A conqueror, I say, may make a total change, and then the tyranny of those wretches will be the first things exposed to his resentment. . . . It is a conqueror's business to repair a part of the mischief he has occasioned. The right, therefore, of conquest, I define thus: a necessary, lawful but unhappy power, which leaves the conqueror under a heavy obligation of repairing the injuries done to humanity.

MONTESQUIOU (X, iv.)

FOREWORD

THE HERO is Harry Carey. He is tall and looks bulky because he is heavy in the chest and heavy in the shoulders. Look at him carefully: you'll find he has heavy thighs, but thin legs, and a pelvic basin heavy-hipped and flat-stomached, such as the best brood-bitches have.

His mother thinks he looks like a Jew, but she is an anti-Semite, and she believes that They walk differently, and you can always tell by Their ears, which are large and peaked. What she sees are his swarthy face, his hard beard and dark throat that give him an air of pain. He has his mother's eyes, though, hazel and rather large; often, when they are not angry, they look innocent and vacant. His hair is black and curly, like his father's, but much thicker and a little coarse. His mouth is full and lies, like a child warm and contentedly in bed, tucked in the heavy folds of his cheeks. He moves quickly, surprisingly agile, and speaks with gestures, but slowly, which his father dislikes. He and Harry's mother both stand up very straight and look small. Harry sits awkwardly, but looks an uneasy giant. So there are questions of scale and movement unresolved in him; his various parts are still unagreed.

The country is Germany. The nation has conquered once and fallen twice within four generations. It is both proud and pandering; it rules and obeys so that it is hard to distinguish which life befits it best. Its people have industry and imagination; the land, wealth and beauty. At this moment in history, Germany is divided into four parts: one the French rule with bragadoccio and arrant inferiority, and queer humanity; another, to the North, belongs to England . . . she rules with humility among the low and luxury among the

high, taking, building, losing no love over her fief; a third part, by far the largest, is under the sway of the Russians, only Russians who have lost souls and humour, arrogant, brawling, repressed peasants' sons die-cast by unimaginative leaders for a thankless task . . . but where the others do not care, the Soviets at least consider this nation a problem and are willing to set their minds to it.

The fourth part, where most, but not all, of this story takes place, is American. We bring with us what we are. Not so the French, the British, the Soviets. Their occupation is a patriotic enclave where home flags flutter. We have made ours, or remade it: we have infiltrated the country, and the country us. We have married there, begotten there, settled there. We have been aped there, despised there. Our part, mostly fertile, pretty on a small scale as far as the Alps, contains all the other parts: their virtues or vices all breed or fester where we set our hatching hand.

MASTER RACE, the first novel of a gifted young American writer, is set in Occupied Germany just after the end of the War. Harry Carey, a young non-commissioned officer of the American Security Service, intelligent and sensitive, arrives in Germany with the best intentions, but soon finds himself involved in a bewildering labyrinth of intrigue and self-seeking. This is the Germany of defeat—a land in physical and moral ruin, where macabre figures are emerging from the shadows to batten on the corpse of a nation. Conquerors and conquered are alike corrupt—there is Captain Creeley, the decadent German-loving American officer, there is Baron von Kreilsheim, the master-intriguer and dubious man of destiny, pulling the strings from his hideout in the mountains, the ruthless Sergeant Porteous, out for all he can get, Ali ben Imala and Mrs. Tisch, the professional spies, Senator Vortz, the cynical and astute visiting politician—all these are unforgettable characters who together give a more convincing picture of Occupied Germany than a score of historical textbooks. Moving through this twilight world of ruins, where nothing is what it seems, and where every word and action seems to conceal another meaning, Harry, the well-intentioned idealist with a core of hardness, gradually comes to understand the meaning of Conquest. And when he finds in the young girl Mieke, who falls in love with him, all the guilt and self-pity of the German heart, in the end he turns away from her in revulsion.

The theme of this book is Defeat—how it affects both Conquerors and Conquered. It is a theme which is crucial for our time, and to it the author brings remarkable gifts—unsparing realism, a poetic sense of atmosphere, a compassionate irony and a deep insight into human character. The Germany of this book is Germany at its lowest ebb and is already a matter of history. But it is the Germany out of which the new Germany must come. This subtle and powerful novel is important for our understanding of that enigmatic country.

THE PLATFORM at Kassel. The troop train stopped and it was two o'clock in early December; suddenly six soldiers had fallen asleep from potato schnapps on their first German night, sprawled, because the floor was splashed with vomit, two on a side on the wooden benches, and one in the luggage rack, which was too high and too narrow. The sixth blocked the corridor outside the compartment, and Harry Carey, the seventh, awake, stuck his head out of the window into the burning cold air, waking Archie up as the leather thong flew. The soldiers were sleeping, but Harry stared, seeking that smell of orange somewhere in the schnapps, that bright clean orange that came from the station where the conductor, a blue overcoat up over his neck and a red lantern swinging at his side, limped toward him.

Instead Harry saw two mongrels: the bitch, as Harry breathed in, was staring right at him from a tiny black pupil shining in the darkness, while the male, frenziedly shivering, ground into her and out of her, cracking his back fast like a whip, two forward legs straddling her spine and biting sharply into her ribs.

The conductor passed Harry, padding along, blowing his breath shaped like a big diamond in front of him from the locomotive, where whatever it was they were stopping for clanked and spurted steam in little sharp jets . . . came and kicked them, the two dogs, reasonably, with a tiny foot in an old boot, without looking down at them. The male ran away whimpering and cold, scurrying along the seams in the

concrete, but the bitch didn't move until the conductor kicked her again. Harry saw pale blue eyes over the muffler and razor-sharp bristles on his cheeks. The bitch had two sharp quills on either side of her muzzle. After he had kicked her again, the bitch started to fall over stiff on the spot where she had already stood, Harry now saw, dead several minutes, her eyes still staring frozen-liddedly at him, and finally toppled, legs in air. The conductor jogged her catty-cornered to the rails, and a few soldiers, stirring from the sudden silence along the frosty row of compartments, leaned, puffing air over fogged-up windows, watching the conductor go down to the caboose, get on, and swing his red lantern into the steam rising from the wheels.

After the train pulled out of Kassel, Harry slept in fits. It was too cold to leave the window open. Levine and Bremer found room in the corridor until the M.P.s. rolled and pushed them back on to the floor of the compartment into the smell and mess of catting.

Then once, at five, a train blurled past, Hanover-bound. Harry saw the markers rattling on the wooden coachwork. The train lurched on to a curve and the windows got sucked out. A last-minute reminder from his mother Harry remembered, to look up Lieutenant Gen. Sir Ralph Bodkin. I was at school with his wife. Military Government Hanover.

Everything waited for a dawn that obstinately did not come. Harry strained his eyes to every glow, the haze of Rhine towns, a refinery, while on either side, inside and out, it was black, moonless and cold.

And it wasn't five, either. Harry looked at Levine's watch, face upwards on the underside of a hairy wrist. The dial glowed in a thin beam of yellow light from the corridor. The hands said a quarter to four. The train stopped and shunted. Treysa? Harry had a map somewhere, but not at hand. He was somewhere, that ought to be enough. The train watered from huge swinging hoses, backed, coupled, uncoupled. Ahead was a single floodlight. But the nimbus and the glare

were excitement, billboards in another language: new tongues, premonitions, new meanings.

To sleep again. Now two more hours in ignorance of surroundings.

Might they be among mountains for those lights to hang high in the black on their right? Now some, red, were below, passed slowly; then a flashlight swung, dim and yellow, a bicycle on a strip of road . . . going to work? Harry, bundled in his overcoat, huddled and pressed his cheek closer to the cold glass.

Country and wind rushed past.

Then dawn deprived him fully of sleep. The compartment stirred. Levine wound his fat watch, mock-rubbing his back, slouching over Bremer to the W.C.

"For Christ's sake," he said, stamping back, "there isn't one."

"Goddam Jew," Bremer cursed from the floor, staring up at Levine's pudgy body. "What do you want?"

Levine licked his lower lip. It hung out like a little red tongue. His broad face looked tucked in little rolls into his brown wool shirt.

"Wake up Feinstein!" Levine poked his finger through the webbing of the luggage rack. Feinstein leaned over sleepily and slowly put on his glasses.

"You've missed half your stinking *Heimland* sleeping," Levine said angrily. He shook his watch next to his ear. Then he shook it again. "Come on Carey, help me get these hoboes up."

Bremer huddled in his field jacket on the floor.

"Jesus! Who did all this?"

Levine held his nose and looked down by the window. Archie was still fast asleep on one seat. Bremer shook him. He translated a placard on the wall:

PASSENGERS ARE REMINDED NOT TO LEAVE ANYTHING
BEHIND IN THE COMPARTMENTS!

Archie wouldn't move.

"You hear that you Hillbilly?" Bremer muttered, half falling back to sleep. "You're in a carriage. Put on your shoes."

Archie turned over to the wooden slats on the wall.

It was not very light. Harry let the window drop a few holes to evacuate the smells.

"Shut it, shut it," Feinstein murmured patiently from the luggage rack. "I can't take it."

Harry shut it and stared out, thinking. German air. It didn't seem unfamiliar to them. They slept. They slouched and swore. Was it not even unfamiliar to them that they could be so much their usual selves? He stepped over Bremer and pulled the sliding door open. Outside, he looked back into the compartment. Bremer was fumbling with a cigarette. Lit, the grey smoke filled the wooden box where they had all slept. Levine struggled to drag Feinstein off the rack. Archie slept on and let Bremer twist his shoulder. It surprised Harry that he should have no feeling about any of them. He found that he did not know them. Yes, their talk was incongruous but they were brave soldiers, conquerors. All of them had passed an invisible frontier, and none of them should be the same. Yet six months ago, Levine was just as much sense and idleness, rubbing his body, minding his mind and words, affectionate, easily injured; Bremer had his pose of cynical hatred, and under the pose some real hatred, because he'd attended the University of Wisconsin and knew some of the words that could make hatred palpable, an uneasy nature, as quick to insult as Levine was to forgive; Feinstein had his tiny ears, his glasses without which he looked, and was, absent, as though they took away his hearing and his desire to hear what went on about him; Archie had his drolleries, his awkward, normal view of the world, the least likely to be shaken, Harry thought. For six months they had talked about this day, through training, through discipline and gradually ascendant cynicism. They had talked about the country, Germany, the ruin of her, the ruining of her. They

had talked of schnapps and trains and perhaps, he could not remember, of conductors and old men and dead dogs. Certainly they had talked about responsibility, and Bremer had laughed, and Levine rubbed his chin, and Archie put it up to the Army, and he himself had worried. But in all the talk, the country had seemed familiar. It had limits, a landscape, people, a situation, a past, half a future.

But where they were now was alien land, and Harry wished himself elsewhere. Anywhere rather than this Germany of his fear. The train spited him; it never went fast, savouring the country it click-clicked, click-clicked through, the thick obstinate night, the thin and level morning.

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HARRY WAS one of the first to notice Lieutenant Colonel Peary (North Pole for short). His first view of the colonel was his precipitate departure from the Bremerhaven-Marburg train at high noon (they had arrived and had been waiting twenty minutes to be fetched from the Kaserne), being escorted across four beds of tracks on the far side of the troop-train by which Harry and the rest of the shipment were lined up. When the engineer suddenly uncoupled two cars—a sharp noise like that would make Harry start—he witnessed an unexpected scene. Four officers held the Colonel, two by his legs, two by his arms. The entire detachment on the near side of the train turned after Harry to the sound of his curses and saw him kicking and wrestling furiously, his pants halfway off and caught awkwardly on his knees.

He was a great stick of a man, even at that distance. His cap had been knocked off in the tug-of-war and his scalp was bald red and mottled. The struggle continued into a coal-drop on the other side of the siding, in the clamour of shovels and lumps of coal thrown against its corrugated walls. Then the

din subsided. Two of his guard of honour returned crest-fallen. Not only had they been treacherously exposed by the uncoupled cars, but one of them had to march back to the trucks that had just arrived at the depot—the lieutenant who had held Pcary's right leg—with his whole back wet, from shoulder blades to buttocks. The lieutenant swept the troops with a disdainful look and entered the station house.

The ranks had become ragged, staring across the tracks for a sequel. The next-in-command on the station side of the box cars held a tense and hurried conference. A young captain was sent to discipline the troops.

"Turn around there," he screamed. "Line up! Dress right!" He strode importantly through a cluster of non-coms.

The damage had been done. No one paid the slightest attention to the captain. A few squatted on their duffle-bags, a group tossed icy stones into a helmet-liner, most, hungry and hung-over, sprawled on the cinders. For three hours, long after the captain had magnanimously let them stand at ease, little knots, or a single soldier, in some warm corner of baggage, would drop to sleep. The sergeants, fingering bulky dog-eared orders, slouched listlessly up and down. They waited. Harry shivered with the cold. He seemed to be lying flat on an icy washboard. He dozed and started, ran to get warm, and finally fell asleep by Levine, who, quiet and undisturbed, could sleep anywhere.

Bremer woke Harry up with a poke in the ribs when the long convoy of ton-and-a-half trucks revved up, backfired, and lumbered off. It seemed that they had been sent down to the station to fetch this group, but now had to hurry back to the Kaserne to collect an outgoing shipment, bound for Frankfurt on the same train. Then the trucks returned, an hour later, when it was already four, and getting dark. Hurry up and wait, the phrase gave them all a good laugh, because the trucks stood there another three-quarter hour, idle. It gave them all a laugh and a sense of community, cheap.

The newly arrived waved to the newly departing. More

trucks kept arriving from the hill, shuddering to stops, gears clashing, hands of all sizes waving dully. There was not much mingling, the Kaserne group not knowing so much more than the new arrivals. Still, they put on a show, flinging bags through compartment windows, using their few words of German to assail the stationmaster leaning out of his oil-smoky hut, shouting addresses and obscene admonitions to whomsoever asked.

For a few brief moments Harry had the feeling that he had spent the last year arriving where others knew more, but he reasoned to himself that anything new appeared that way, and that it was only the newness that had been continuous in his life. There was not the time to think, or talk to those from the Kaserne. As rapidly as they had arrived slowly, the locomotive impatient and hooting, last doors clacked shut, the Marburg group was shunted off in another unknown direction. The mystery was in the moving, Harry thought. And by each move, the newcomers are made to understand: you may be conquerors, the rulers of the land, but victory belongs to those who got here first, and failing those, to the conquerors who got here next. Line forms to the rear for the famous fruits. And each move takes time, and can be called learning, except when you are moving like that, in no particular direction, and with a sluggish mass, because in that condition no one knows more than his neighbour. You're all marking time.

But if there were any conquerors there that December afternoon, Harry couldn't spot them. He remarked to Levine that they were more like stragglers, a band of deserters, lined up in baggy serge overcoats, buttoned in dull brass, at their feet the duffle bags they had all grown to resemble, tied up at the necks with stringy ties, being pushed or hoisting themselves into the trucks. The Krauts in their drivers' cabins laughed and scratched at their blue fatigue caps. Young men, with nothing to laugh about. Harry could forgive, but not forget their laughter.

"Some joke, Buddy," Feinstein muttered through the canvas flaps. The mechanics turned around curiously. Levine laughed.

"Relax, it's just some joke of their own . . ."

"We must look funny, I suppose . . ."

"No point in starting out feeling inferior," Levine proposed disinterestedly.

"So that's what it is . . .", Feinstein passed Harry a cigarette.

"That's what it is," Levine said, trying to avoid an argument with Bremer, who was slightly flushed, and bristled at the word inferior.

"That's what you say it is," Bremer muttered. "These bastards. . . ."

It would not have occurred to Harry, who did not feel naturally superior like Bremer, but what could be more normal than that they should feel inferior? Only people at the top or bottom were conscious of these distinctions. . . .

"Listen, wherever you go, there's always someone up and someone down," Levine put in, as though reading Harry's thoughts.

"Bastards," Bremer answered. "You too, you lousy Kraut lover. . . ." Bremer grinned. He didn't want any of his companions to think he meant that remark seriously, even if he had.

The young captain returned, still tall and blank behind his uniform. But he was worried now. His right hand flurried far below the hair line, brushing back his brow as though rubbing away wrinkles. Also he was short tempered, having missed his own lunch. He could be sure of himself in a set of limited situations, but this was not one. These men should have been at the Kaserne hours ago. They should have been fed. They should have arrived, eaten and slept on time. The colonel would chew him up.

The captain sobered. He heard a noise from one of the trucks. What he actually heard was Bremer's last "bastards",

but Levine was the obvious target, all his weight and dignity stuffed into the jumble of their truck. The captain pointed at Levine with his clip-board fluttering with morning reports. In the background the train backed up, stopped, whistled piercingly, and started forward. There was scattered applause in the convoy.

"You there," the captain shouted to Levine. He waited for the train whistle to subside. Then he came closer and peered into the back of Harry's truck. He had very young and blue eyes, Harry noticed.

"You don't like the way we do things, I gather?"

Levine relied placidly on his dignity. Let others make fools of themselves.

"Sir?"

The captain glared.

"Don't talk back, goddam it, soldier!"

"He didn't say nothing," Archie butted in.

"You too . . . what's your name, private?"

Levine relaxed and Archie saluted lazily, but a lieutenant, much taller than the captain, a thin ridge of hair stuck on his high skull like a cock's crest, came cap-in-hand to confer with the captain. Together they stalked off, the captain scribbling on his clip-board.

"You don't like the way we do things here?" Bremer threatened Levine. It was not a particularly good joke. A few laughed, not many. Harry felt rather sorry for the captain. The Code didn't always fit the circumstances, and a man could easily make himself ridiculous. At the same time Harry was not really sorry. He, Levine and the rest were also in peculiar circumstances. They were *under* the captain.

After Marburg, the trip, the castle, the trucks, even the uniform they all wore disappeared, but the captain remained, or one very like him.

He was there to remind Harry of his condition.

AT THE Kaserne the long line of their arrival choked the concrete corridor alongside the Mess Hall. High stacks of humid, soap-smelling trays steamed by the door, and turning sweeter inside, the smell spread to a glut of mashed potatoes in ice-cream dips and wax beans in water the colour of urine.

Harry, feverish, alternately hot and cold, coughed through the meal without any appetite, impatient with a surly Bremer and a ribald and triumphant Levine. Neither gave him time to consider things they had seen coming down: bunkers and cellars where families huddled from winter, burned farms with char blisters on their whitewash, pillaged palaces, wet slack towers of churches, each holding the sum of eleven years of the surrounding lives, an empire not lost, but never built. It was one thing, poor, to keep alive on potato peels, and look to the next day; another to eat the same peels when you have been promised pomegranates.

But Marburg the fair city, upright and intellectual, untouched, sprightly-treed and castle-topped even in the face of cold December, Marburg deadened Harry's sympathy. It had survived with arrogance, only to learn humiliation.

A few hours before Harry came out of the overheated Mess, the cold clouds above him had been gathering darkness across the Nordsee, from whose littoral they sucked their German bitterness, like blown sand: now the same clouds, possessed of sting and brine, pitted the wind-pocked face of the Kaserne hill. In the involving murk, troops in brown and grey disappeared from view an arm's length away. The valley floor was an invisible black sea in which they foundered. He felt the country already deprive him. The wind blew. *Leide, Leide*, sang the wind. *Deutschland is low*.

Rumour had it they would be moving tomorrow, and back in their barracks the men were loath to empty their cumbersome baggage. They were uneasy and unsettled; they longed to arrive. In the light of the fortress's naked rare bulbs

they were like padded khaki ghosts: a lot slept, who would sleep anywhere; a lot did not want to go to sleep. They huddled together in the dormitory as much for companionship as for warmth. It was a first night away from home, but who was going to admit strangeness? Except Archie who sat on the edge of the bunk next to Harry's:

"Man, what am I doing here?"

The generators whirled, desultory chatter. Outside was the wind and a beginning snow. Then the lights dimmed, and five minutes after, went out. The oil stoves down the long centre aisle, one at either end, one in the middle, were turned off by the CQ with a flashlight in hand, making bedcheck.

The soon-sleeping bodies breathed deeply. Harry waited and listened. Around him in almost mechanical unloveliness their lungs pumped. How would their breaths cross again, where and how? It was almost worse than loneliness, this constant presence of another. The community was enforced now, no longer at all what he had intended when, enlisting, he had been so certain it would bring him awareness, as he called it then, being so sure that he was unaware. He wanted to make tangible contact with his hands, to be buckled, to laugh with others and understand their jokes. It was after the war, then, too late to feel left out. He had had other pre-occupations, and as a boy of nineteen, he, with others, cheered the war as it cheered them. Last summer the pre-occupations had vanished, and with them the cheer. Soldiers returned throughout the year, taking up, not where he had started, but where he had left off. That middle part of their lives, changing them, had left him unchanged.

Harry had a spasm of coughing and fell into fitful and feverish sleep. The barracks was silent but for the whir and hum of the generators. Landscapes flashed by as though the rails still clicked under him on some rolling stock of sleep: bits of dreams like out-of-the-way stations.

A few hours later Harry started. Someone was shaking his

shoulder. A man stood by his cot, flashlight in hand. He kept the beam pointed at Harry's face and hid his own in its bright corona of light. A second shadowy figure moved and muttered behind the first. Harry again felt a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Next bed," the second one said.

"Corporal Carey?" the first asked, leaning over the bed, but keeping the light in Harry's eyes. Behind him, the second man shook Archie's bunk by the springs.

"Wake up, soldier, wake up!"

"Over here," Harry said groggily. "I'm Carey."

Number One stopped shaking his shoulder.

"You're Carey?" his companion said, turning around dubiously. "Why didn't you say so?"

"Get your clothes on, and hurry."

"For Christ's sake . . ."

"Listen, soldier," Number Two answered, "it's no skin off my nose if you don't get your call. . . ."

Number One had started to shake Harry again; his friend turned to give Archie a last playful bounce.

"Go back to sleep soldier." He got no answer from Archie. Now the first was playfully pointing the flashlight around the barrack room. The light reflected from the metal frames of the cots.

"What call?" Harry asked, shivering. He lifted his legs over the side of the bunk.

"Don't you want your call?" Number Two asked, taking a cigarette out of his blouse and lighting it.

"You don't have to shout." Harry struggled into his pants.

"Better put your coat on too."

"Hurry!" Number Two gave Archie a cheerful whack with a clipboard.

"Sleep soundly. . . ."

Harry followed them out into the night, knees still limp from sleep. The greatcoat lay loosely on his shoulders; the wind bit through its flaps. The nap of the coat was cold. It had been a blanket on the bed. There was a thin powder of

snow on the ground, blowing in circles and whipping against the walls. They walked several hundred yards around the perimeter of the floodlit fence. The three of them walked bent over forward. The jovial two chatted through the lapels of their coats. They stopped at the door of a grey wooden shack, with a board reading COMMUNICATIONS nailed to the door.

Inside it smelled of hot oil. His two companions fell into silence and sat down at one end of the small room. A corporal was sitting at a desk, smiling amicably at Harry over his feet propped on the blotter.

"Service . . . ain't the Army wonderful?"

He turned admiringly to Numbers One and Two. Harry could see now that they were both sergeants, medium-sized, cheerful men, a little like each other, small jawed and bright-eyed. Number Two was still in a jovial mood. He nudged his friend and pointed to Harry. The CQ looked over to them.

"Sit down," the CQ said to Harry, pointing to a chair by the stove.

"You look tired," Number Two added, picking at his nails with a nail-clipper.

Harry sat down and the two sergeants came over to warm their duffs by the stove.

"My call . . ." Harry asked.

"Just sit down," the CQ said. "We aim to please."

A lieutenant entered the room through a door behind the corporal's desk.

"There you are. You're Corporal Carey aren't you? Where in Christ's name . . . well, never mind, come in. What are you waiting for?" He motioned Harry into another room, smaller and hotter than the first. "You two jackasses get lost," he said to the sergeants.

There were two desks in the room, two chairs, and a Signal Corps radio with a switchboard against one wall. At the switchboard was a WAC with fat upper arms and a tiny circular stain at the armpits of her blouse.

"Emergency call from the States," the lieutenant said briskly. "Must be important to get priority. You got powerful friends?"

Harry shook his head. He had no friends. He had never realised it so clearly. His teeth chattered. No friends. His head began to spin, slowly at first, and hum. No friends. He tried to think. Someone had died. His mother? He thought of her first. And then, just as quickly, he felt relieved. It was as though he had known it all along.

He leaned against the wall. What would it mean? I can't compare it to much, he said . . . her father an expected sanitarium death: I gave Mother a holy image and dropped five dollars into the kitty for a mass. Who else? Her half-brother, he died of a smashed wind-shield and a high proportion of worthlessness. She cried all night. Is that what I'm meant to do? I am not thinking straight.

He had been leaning against the back of the operator's chair instead of the wall. The lieutenant was staring at him angrily, she only with curiosity.

"You all right, corporal?" She turned to the lieutenant. "Here it is, sir, but I can't understand the German operator too well. . . ." She smelled bitter and excited.

"Well?" the lieutenant said sharply. "Do you speak German, corporal?"

Harry nodded.

"Give him the phone Amy. . . ." He pushed a chair near the WAC. She got up and gave Harry the earphones on a metal clip, and her own chair.

"He doesn't look well. . . ."

The lieutenant cranked the switchboard absent-mindedly. Harry sat down limply. Behind him hovered the WAC. First she leaned forward and put the phones in his hands; then she helped his hand lift them to his ears. All he heard was the crackle of static. Then she put her hand on his forehead. Her hand was cool. She was gentle.

"He has a high temperature." The lieutenant came over.

"You all right, corporal?"

Harry was listening to the operator at the other end.

"Hello, hello. . . ."

"Can't they find someone who speaks English?" the lieutenant asked.

"Perhaps they could, sir," Amy answered. "They don't want to."

"You all right, Corporal?"

Harry listened dumbly to the phone. His mind would not focus. The lieutenant snatched the earphones from Harry's head.

"Sprechen Sie louder, goddam it. LOUDER."

The WAC asked the operator to spell the message out.

"Buchstaben . . ." she looked the word up in the pocket dictionary on top of the switchboard.

"H as in Heinie," the lieutenant shouted furiously into the mouthpiece. "S as in Schwein, Sugar, Sam, Schiss!"

The WAC took over the phones calmly.

"I'll try again, sir."

She put her free hand on Harry's forehead again. He began to cry.

"Get him out of here," she said to the lieutenant. "Haven't you got a doctor on this post?" The lieutenant shook Harry by the shoulders.

"Are you OK?"

"It's clearer now, sir."

"Hello," the lieutenant said. "How do you say no one, Amy. Quick."

"Niemand."

"Kann Niemand Englisch sprechen? Hello? Ja. Englisch."

"They're just laughing at you, sir."

The lieutenant put the earphones down. He helped the WAC carry Harry into the outer room. When he had Harry by the CQ's desk he went into the radio room and bawled into the mouthpiece, trying to get the operator's name.

In the CQ's room the two sergeants grinned at Harry. The corporal stared at the WAC.

"Keep your pecker up," Number Two said.

Then Harry collapsed to the floor, too suddenly for the WAC to support him.

4

ALWAYS, ONCE and sometimes twice a day, Levine would take the elevator to the sixth floor of the Splendide Spa.

"Your bed is where Princess Eugenie slept."

"You're wrong, Bert, Archduke Otto. He wanted it five feet off the ground. He was afraid of animals."

By the bed was a three-legged stool. The orderly who washed Harry and changed Harry and jabbed Harry's buttocks with penicillin had to kneel on it to reach the bed. At that he was clumsy and once slipped. Levine himself was only five foot seven. He sat on the stool.

"I don't know what I'd do without you. . . ." It was true. Bremer and the others were six floors below; they had a mysterious life of their own. It seemed that they had come in a tight group this far only to be scattered. Levine carried up stories of their fabled living to the sickbed: Archie handling silver oyster-forks, Feinstein unable to sleep on the hotel feather-beds.

"Think nothing of it," Levine said, taking the hypodermic from the orderly. The syringe nestled in one fat hand, in the heavy hair and folds of his flesh. He inserted it skilfully while the other hand finicked with cotton and alcohol before Harry knew the injection was completed. The former Ph.D. in tropical medicine, the expert entomologist, leaned back to bask in the admiration of the orderly.

Levine left, then the afternoon all passed into a dream. But the dream came without sleep. The dream went on without

much awareness of surroundings: the nurse came, hung her thin coat on the peg behind the door, sat in her chair, tried to feed him, remade the bed under him; the doctor came and hung his thin coat on the peg behind the door, bent over Harry, whispered instructions to the nurse; mail came, a cable ("Shall I read it now?" the nurse asked. "Is it auf Englisch?"), a Frankfort Military Bulletin; Levine came again, poked his head inside the door, Harry was sweating and his eyes felt heavy in their sockets.

It was late at night. It was the night before Christmas. The orchestras blared in the ballroom, dancers shuffled, laughter blew up the air-well. In intervals of silence Harry heard trees rub and grunt when the wind shifted. The french windows were closed; the tray of food, untouched, lay on the night-table by the bed. Harry dreamed intermittently of disaster in a way that made it very personal, and when the shouting was over and Christ was born, something caught fire in his chest and he had to grope on the night-table for the little bell to summon the nurse.

"It is nothing," she said, "the Herr Doktor will come in the morning." It's nothing, Harry repeated to himself. He went back where he had come from. Huge pairs of lungs looking like water wings collapsed like bubbles in oil slick.

He asked the nurse to give him his musette bag, but she wanted to open it herself. He reached over and snatched the bag from her hand.

"Give me that!"

"It is nothing," she said. She took the bag gently back from him and opened it. "What do you want?" she asked. Harry turned his head away and she returned to her cot. Each time she got up she put on her cap; when she lay down, she took the cap off.

He could imagine the photograph just as well. It was in his father's last letter, received at Kilmer just before boarding the *General Black*. In the photograph Walter stood on a slight eminence looking out on the pock-marked deserts of Nevada.

On the back he had written: "You try and be cheerful in 110 degrees!" Exclamation mark and all, as though it were the heat. It had become the trite thing to say, between his mother and himself, all that year when Harry still saw her and Walter had gone back to California: Walter has regretted. He has lost us. Harry had taken the photograph as corroboration. The man looked sad and tired. Walter had not sent it on for a long time . . . the photograph was taken when Walter was still only talking about "coming East", as though West to East were more, much more, than a journey.

But then why did he want to look at the picture? Was he beginning to understand?

5

JUST BEFORE dawn, Harry fell asleep for two hours. When he woke up he felt weak, but seemed to have rallied from the worst. The Christmas morning when the nurse pulled back the curtains was bitter, grey and windy.

"Not very cheerful, is it?" Harry asked the nurse.

"Ach! There is not much cheer for us. . . ."

That note. Harry didn't feel like listening.

"Push me over to the window, will you?"

The nurse turned the bed around uncomplainingly and Harry relented.

"You're not angry, are you, because I am impatient? I just don't see why you should always think of you." She didn't understand and Harry was content merely to look out.

Six floors below were park and spa, Bad Homburg, round bandstand, boxed bare hedges. Behind, the high sooty spires of Frankfort burned. Until noon he watched. Watched a knot of unfestive skaters on the mineral waters, and during the lunch hour, the secretaries for the Occupation strolling

in pairs, shabby, high-stockinged, threadbare . . . where so many opportunities beckoned.

The doctor interrupted. The doctor was always in a white tunic. Just as he came in Harry remembered the cable from the night before. It was still under his pillow. Harry put out his wrist. The doctor took his pulse.

"Ja. You did not have a good night. I think that you will spend Christmas Day in the oxygen tent. That will not be so bad, will it?" He put down Harry's wrist and felt his forehead. "You will be able to breathe more easily." He beckoned the nurse back; she stood behind him with the thermometer in its glass of blue water.

"You realise your left lung is now infected. You must fight back. If you want to fight back, you will be all right. You're lucky that you have been well fed and are in 'good shape' as you call it, no?" He looked sharply and almost angrily at Harry. "I don't think I could resist such an attack. You are young and strong." He paused. "Have you been eating what I told you?" Harry nodded. The Herr Doktor was quick in covering the break in his professionalism. "Fruit and lots of liquids. You are strong and young. I will bring the oxygen tent at eight and you will please try and get some sleep tonight. It is important that you sleep. Besides, I will give you something that will make you sleep." He repeated it as he would to a child. "You must sleep."

He left in a hurry, taking his coat off the peg and closing the door carefully behind him. Harry took out the cable and read it.

S.A. HARRY CAREY, RA 12 231 201 970 CIC DET
APO 757 POSTMASTER NY

WALTER DIED IN HIS SLEEP HOTEL NEVADA
DECEMBER TWO OVERSTRAIN FROM ALL-
DAY SKI AFTER TOO MANY YEARS INAC-
TIVITY STOP SORRY YOU DIDNT HEAR
BEFORE STOP CORONER REPORTS HEART

WITH LUNG COMPLICATIONS STOP FUNERAL
DECEMBER FIVE BEVERLY HILLS BOGIE MY-
SELF FEW FRIENDS STOP WALTER WOULD
HAVE LIKED IT STOP HELEN GONE EAST
STOP MOTHER VERY BRAVE STOP CON-
DOLENCES HE LOVED YOU

FLORENCE

Walter was Harry's father, Florence, Walter's sister, and Helen his father's second wife. Bogie was his father's mother, and it was understood she would be very brave.

At eight o'clock the orderly brought Harry two barbiturates and a few seconds later the doctor ushered in the night nurse wheeling the oxygen apparatus before her. They snapped the fasteners on the plastic tent, twisted the cocks on the oxygen tanks, and said good night to each other with unnecessary ceremony.

The gas leaked in steadily. The night and parties of all in the building blended whirled and bellowed below, outside. Everything in the tent was steady. The cable was still in Harry's hand, clipped into the tent with the Herr Doktor's firm hands. He was shut up with his father's death.

After a few hours Harry felt himself rise and rise, and suddenly he was too high to hear the impatient popping of corks, the charivari of confetti and streamers, crackers, practical jokes, toy hats and tin horns, too high, too steady. On his five-foot-high bed the rhythm of Duke Hammschlecht and his Royal Bavarians stayed downstairs, but the piercing trumpet and lowing sax floated up the airwell and floated up with Harry in his plastic bag, sucking in laughter and looking at the world's wrinkled surface and the hose that coiled heavily across his legs to two metal cylinders. There the great rubber bladder collapsed, swayed back to breath and discharged again, replacing Corporal Carey several times a minute.

THEN HARRY lost sight and sound of everything. He was back in New York, in mid-May, a freak snowstorm and bitter cold cutting East from Montana and Saskatchewan.

It was eleven o'clock at night. A tall man with a thin moustache, carrying a hat-box, and standing next to him said:

"Bad weather in Chicago. . . ."

Snow at LaGuardia, snow drifting on the runways, slippery criss-crosses of white the pilot sees from the air. Around Harry waited a small knot of people, without suitcases, some since seven, like Harry, others having phoned from home and come later. All having had to wait too long. They looked out across the field from glass enclosures.

There was a roar outside, but no one moved out of the door. They waited. The DC6 was taxi-ing in, throttled down from the darkness to the floodlit runway. Two mechanics ran to the wingtips. The bulky silver body pivoted on its own length. The mechanics' overalls bellied in the wash of the four propellers and then collapsed, with the motors, into stillness. A small red tractor herded a caravan of rubber-tired wagons to the plane while two others of the ground-crew wheeled out the light aluminium gangway. They ran because of the cold.

Walter was one of the last to step into the circle of light at the door. He fumbled with a small blue bag stamped TWA and a bulky envelope of brochures. Then he waved in the general direction of Harry and pulled in his shoulders against the cold.

They rode into the city in almost total silence, Walter sitting on the right and staring out the window. When had he first noticed that Walter kept his face averted? When Walter didn't kiss him as they met, and they stood awkwardly, forgetting even to shake hands? Was it at the Midtown tunnel, when they stopped in the glare of the toll-booths? At the

Saint Regis while his father changed into the warmest clothes he had, laughing about how warm it had been on the Coast?

Something in the way he said: "It's very different from what I remembered. . . ." He couldn't keep it hidden forever. But why was it important? It showed clearly on his cheek, the growth on the mandible, the small hard round lump. Walter couldn't have hidden it.

They saw Danny Kaye as Walter Mitty. Harry laughed, but his father didn't. Walter came out depressed. They walked back from Broadway to the hotel in grim city twilight. Walter still walked on Harry's right, probably from habit.

"It only aches a little when it's cold. . . ." Then, having mentioned it, they talked about the film. The knob was best avoided as a subject; Walter wrapped his muffler tighter around his cheek.

He started across Fifth Avenue without looking at the lights, explaining how it didn't seem funny to him any more, the film. His speech was blurred and Harry had to concentrate to hear him. A bus bore down on them and Harry called Walter back to the curb. He obeyed.

"The change of weather must have tired me. I haven't caught up with the lost hours. . . ."

"You are in a bad way," Harry said. They both laughed. Then when Harry had stopped laughing, his father went on chuckling.

At the end of the week the weather changed; they were suddenly in summer. Walter seemed glad of it, but though they walked together more often, he still had little to say. They were closer than before, but only because each had refreshed his memory. They had also found a new set of subterfuges: they talked at cross-purposes. Each had refreshed his memory, but neither had anything new to say.

They had a single brief conversation on the subject of the tumour.

"It's quite benign," Walter said after Harry had asked him directly. "I hardly notice it myself. I just didn't want it to seem unfamiliar. . . ."

"I'm sorry." Harry had interpreted his father's last remark as a criticism. "You don't want to talk about it."

"No."

"Shouldn't you have it out?"

"The doctor says so, but I hardly think it's worth while. It grows very slowly."

"You've had it looked at?"

"Not too closely. It isn't necessary to look all that closely." Harry wanted to touch it, to know whether it was soft or hard, round or irregular.

"You ought to. . . ."

Harry felt there wasn't much argument left to him.

"You worry like your mother," Walter said. "I might. . . ." Then he repeated it, as though waiting for Harry to add something. "I just might, if. . . ."

What else was there, after he had gone, left to answer that Harry had left unanswered . . . besides that little phrase? What was the "if"? Just the letter with the photograph. Was that all Walter had meant to say? The man had never been very vocal. Harry knew the letter by heart. Part of it went: "Probably I had my hopes when I was your age, but I honestly don't know today what they mean. There were so many things I wanted. But none of them were me. They were more 'imaginings' of me, things I thought I ought to look like. And it took me until now to have an inkling of what I should have been hoping for then that I can never aspire to now. I do not mean to discourage you. . . ."

"Can't you see?" Harry had told his mother, "he loves us. . . ." But she had begun to believe it no longer, and both he and his father were too much cowards to convince her.

Just the letter, and now less than that, a cable. "He loved you." Walter would have liked it, Florence said of the funeral. Why? Because he wasn't there?

It was early dawn in Bad Homburg. Rumours of the morning reached Harry on his high bed. He was sinking back to earth, peacefully, breathing more easily. The first few deep free breaths came to the stir of the first steps on the icy pavement by the park, hurrying to work or to home, steps mysterious and hopeful.

7

AFTER THE New Year, one by one, everyone shipped over with Harry or squeezed sick in his compartment to Marburg, had said goodbye. Archie gave him a prophylactic farewell in a ribboned package and vanished to Bad Nauheim; Einstein rubbed his tiny ear and gave him warning that Bremer was right behind, Bremer sour on the Japanese gibber he heard in the hotel below, twenty-four CIC agents misdirected or mistrained, the merest administrative error, angry and still correcting stupidity, himself off to Berlin. Goodbye. Goodbye. Finally even Levine left. Going to Munich, he said. Munching.

"Got myself a nice Gentile German girl, too. . . ."

"Live it up," Harry said. "I'll come down and see you." Goodbye. Goodbye. Friendship. And then he was alone.

At last the doctor let him go down to the dining room. He was a stranger. Newcomers fondled the Spa silver; Permanent Party complained that the croutons in their soup were soggy. Harry asked the waiter to find him a table alone. There wasn't one, but Harry was seated with the colonel who was writing the history of the CIC. There had been rumours that Harry was being considered for the job because he'd been to college. As it happened, the colonel had also been to college. The colonel went on to his dessert hurriedly, but didn't flinch when Harry sat down. Much was made of there being no rank in the CIC.

IN MID-JANUARY, there was a further problem: finding something for Harry to do. By staying too long Harry felt he had somehow been discarded. He was an old problem and there were new ones. Traffic in agents and clerks was heavy. To hear the earnest lieutenants in their glass cages, subversion was rife, law flouted, insurrection threatened. Harry wasn't going to dispute their excitement from the few bland German faces he had seen. He let them talk and asked to be assigned. They made up their minds when Harry was sure they no longer would: he was assigned to Region I Headquarters in Esslingen am Neckar.

Esslingen had not been notified of Harry's arrival. It was late at night; the platforms were empty and pitch black. A *Wirtschaft* just closing, a few steps from the station: the proprietor, brawny, a black belcher around his thick neck, let Harry call Headquarters, and an hour later, the sleepy CQ fetched him in a jeep and drove him through Esslingen's medieval walls to the CIC's ultra-modern office building. There he temporarily bedded Harry down on a khaki cot between two desks.

He had to do without much sleep. The following morning at eight the room was used for language lessons, which all attended. Harry had to fold the cot away and pile his belongings in a filing cabinet. For two hours Harry listened as the CO, Colonel Bolger, painfully translated *Emil u. die Detektive*.

Of course, Esslingen was no typical town. A first German acquaintance, the black-frosted spinster with the colewort hair, Frau Rifenberg, could testify to that. It was untouched. On the other hand, it was just like every other town, another acquaintance, Captain Gilkey, would argue—not so much from superiority, either, as Harry had expected; there was awe and hatred blended. The German was a predecessor in the art of superb insolence, hence the awe; the shoe was

on the other foot, hence the hatred. The German was both precedent and victim, and Frau Rifenberg, when Harry explained this to her (she was pained at not capturing the captain's friendship with Harry's), disliked being taken for either. You tell your captain, she said whenever she got the chance, that as for being precedents, her kind of people would never have allowed that foreign riff-raff, that paper-hanger, to behave as he perhaps did . . . if they had known about it, but you had to live under the *Dritte Reich* to know about that Mister Carey, and you're such a boy. And as for being victims, America had no better friend than Germany and the right kind of German, and why abuse one's friends? You tell him, won't you, Mister Carey?

Harry promised. Esslingen was both typical and not typical, as long as you talked. Harry could sense only one fact from the look and feel of the town, from the faces and voices of its inhabitants, even from his own compatriots: that everywhere there was defeat. It was common to all and everything. Suggestions and denials, yes, but defeat was a fact. It was something Harry could understand. Without looking very hard he saw something else: that the German was too busy assigning the responsibility for defeat to admit defeat, and that the American was not yet conscious how much defeat, someone else's, had come to mean for him.

Even this fact, after two more weeks, was no longer half so interesting. Details multiplied between mufti sessions at the Red Cross *Kaffeehaus*, Mess, and eternal badminton games at Headquarters, a triangle routine, a circular shuttle. People to see: the pianist prostituted to swing (Play me something good, Franz . . . an enigmatic smile through yellow teeth) who had, it turned out, never played anything else. People to see: Herr Bachmeister, apt name for an organist . . . *Mensch, ich bin unpolitisch!* . . . an unpolitical organ; poor man, he was drenched in a wife's admiration and practised eight hours daily to restore humility and get out of the house.

The boredom was too great. He begged an ill-fitting

German suit from Supply, a jeep from the Motor Pool, and started for Stuttgart, fourteen miles away. Eschewing the more picturesque road along the Neckar bank, he turned into the hills towards Degerloch, got lost, tried again, got stuck in February mud, and had to wait for a coal-burning Opel to drag him out. The driver didn't laugh; he was obedient and afraid. Harry gave him half a package of cigarettes, waited through elaborate thanks, and got himself directed on to a paved road.

Finally he was over Stuttgart. In the short mid-afternoon sun Harry had something like a 20,000-foot view of Stuttgart: the roads that wound thinly and flatly into an X-ray zone of white powder and black blotches, Stuttgart going dark into a big crater from Canstatt to Feuerbach, from Degerloch down to the Schlossgarten; rings of hills, now that Harry started down, rings of hills becoming rings of destruction zeroing in on target, Hauptbahnhof and marshalling yards. The one built with huge square pillars to outlive the thousand-year empire, the other with pillboxes every hundred yards, should anything go awry.

He drove down and in, braking and twisting, until details became more important than the whole. The stockyards and Allgemeine Chemie, the potash and ground-glass industries were wide from emptiness, beginning to be neat with well-piled bricks. Finally he drew up in the GI Parking Lot behind the *Hoftheater*. There the brown shrouded trucks surrounded the dried up, crazy concrete pool with Dannecker's nymphs. His own jeep Harry parked next to an unrecognisably gutted and undignified immortal. From there to the large hemispherical lounge that overlooked the gardens.

He had been told that the Red Cross held weekly ping-pong tournaments in the damask-hung hall, just behind the box seats of the Opera. But first he must hear *Orpheus and Eurydice*, the Red Cross girl said, by Gluck, Christoph Willibald. He went in. Orpheus sang before the gauze curtain of hell to the clacketing of the warm-up balls; the slapping of rackets

made even more distant the ragged bacchantes and the singers not young any more. The same Red Cross girl wouldn't accept his entry after the Opera: the tournament had already started.

So Harry leaned out the windows of the lounge, hoping for something, not quite sure what, wary in his ill-fitting suit, but lonely. He watched the come and go of GIs, pimps, black marketeers, plain-clothesmen, MPs, girls, children in blue dusters, boys with bobby-pinned hair; the women were few, men a shabby race that walked or wheeled past, short and tight-coated like movie bootleggers, in brown checks or leather swung below the knees and pinched across the chest.

At the end of all the journeys Harry watched was a little misery.

A stubby corporal, dumpy and ugly, with a face of wet fur, moved his girl past Harry to the window.

"Shove over, will you Mac? I want to show my girl beautiful Deutschland!"

"See," the corporal pointed. "Deutschland Kaputt."

"Ja."

"Alles Kaputt." He took the girl by the waist and drew her nearer to the window. Harry was walking away. "Just a minute, Mac," the corporal said, "tell her it stinks. Tell her it stinks in your crummy language."

She was young, perhaps seventeen, perhaps less. She wanted to go down.

Harry said, "Er hat zu viel getrunken. . . ."

"Weiss ich shon. . . ." I know. He's had too much to drink. She made a slight movement of her shoulders towards Harry. Was it gratitude, or scorn? The corporal glowered at Harry.

"Deutschland to you, buddy. . . ."

He was baptised.

AFTER BAPTISM, confirmation. Monday. Captain Gollffing wished to see Corporal Carey.

"That damn fly," Gollffing said. "Been here all morning." Harry kept his eye on the fly for ten minutes while the captain gattling-gunned his way through a speech about the sacred trust of the CIC. Gollffing flicked the fly, finicked it.

"Take this Mr. Goodenough. . . ." Gollffing began on a new tack. "The Reverend Minister. A phony. But drop in. If you want to do something. I've had reports."

Harry had read them. Old MOICs or Memoranda for the Officer In Charge. The KPD threatened to get .0005 of the vote, the Spruchkammer freed the War Criminals.

"I see you've read them," Gollffing said dryly.

"He seemed like a fool. . . ."

"Is a man a fool to you, *Mister Carey*? Tries to do good. Devotes life to good."

Harry was watching the captain's fly. It was on Harry's side of the captain's desk, chinning itself on the scaffolding of the IN basket. The fly was out of Gollffing's reach.

"Try it," the captain hissed.

"He just antagonises them deliberately. I don't think proving you're good does any good to these people. . . ."

"Hurry!" Gollffing interrupted.

Harry looked up at him.

"The fly, you idiot!"

Harry poised his finger as he'd seen the captain do. Fool fly, defying Gollffing. In February too. Harry missed, sympathy having nothing to do with it. The Chief tried again, waiting patiently for his opening, the insect's unwariness. He held his breath. His finger was poised, motionless, odourless, colourless. He missed. The fly had legs like coils. It was determined.

"Acts like a goddam spring fly. Takes a quick finger in spring. I tell you."

"Yes sir."

"Now . . . what was I saying? Ah yes. Not the worst you could do Carey. Take a look around. Catch the temper of the people."

Then they chatted a pleasant enough half-hour. Gollffing asked about Harry's trip. Harry told the captain about Lieutenant Colonel Peary, thinking that he and Gollffing had come a long way in a half-hour. Flicking flies makes a man intimate. Gollffing didn't venture a smile. What he wanted was that fly. Harry decided that was the quality of true officerhood: persistence.

The rest of the morning he played badminton with the CO in a pentagonal atrium of Headquarters. Harry had never been one to curry unpopularity. He lost steadily.

The case of the Reverend Mr. Goodenough was very plain, on the surface. A month's lecture tour under Buchmanite auspices. Twenty-two meetings were history, each a file in a local CIC office. Insults, assault, defamation, sedition, indecent overtures, suggestive exposure, he had wasted no time.

An incident in Wiesbaden. Goodenough made his announcements, showed his film, and was embarking on his speech.

"We all agree . . . the Germans need Moral Rearmament. . . ."

Harmless? Goodenough meant that interchange of positive forces for good in which he believed with vigour. His typed text continued:

". . . and we need the Germans."

Indeed, the Movement did. The appeal was genuine and humble. But when he'd reached that part in Wiesbaden, someone had shouted to his "We need . . ."

"GUNS!"

instead of Germans. Misplaced wit, a schoolboy twist. Goodenough tried ignoring the remark. He began again. The fatal phrase arrived, rushed and self-conscious. Another enemy stood up in back:

"YOU NEED THE GERMANS!"

His own words! But the tone was very different. The need was intended as spiritual. Yes, that's it, sir. That's just it, sir. Goodenough was a frenzy of activity; that way he could forget the hole he was digging himself.

But things got worse before, from boredom, they got better. One suggested food, another clothing, a third an even more pressing, stercoraceous, need. Bedlam there was, and obscenity not long in following. Mrs. Hancher, the discipleless, gospelless, grew gooseflesh under the attack; she threatened to go home and take her projector with her unless Mr. Goodenough remedied the situation. She re-wrote his speech, removing the offending portions. Three days later, in Bad Canstatt, she was assaulted. In Aschaffenburg every poster announcing the meeting was torn down. Goodenough wrote memos to the CIC, blind to the obvious.

It was plain on the surface. Harry didn't blame the Germans. They had merely picked up the scent of futility. No more rutty scent to the bigger dog.

10

THE POSTER was propped up against the wall to the left of the steamy glass door.

MORAL REARMAMENT MEETING

Moderator

Rev. Chauncey Goodenough

of

Philadelphia, USA

FILM! REFRESHMENT! DANCE!

Everyone invited!

Harry was late. The film had already begun. As he pushed in the door, he saw a long row of faces against either wall

crowded blankly away from the single shaft of light down the aisle. In the darkness a moist female hand thrust a leaflet into Harry's hand.

"I'm Mrs. Hancher," the lady said in unpromising German. "*We're happy you could come.*"

"Danke," he muttered.

After some stumbling, Harry found a seat near the front, along the right-hand wall. There he had time to look at his leaflet. It began:

WE WANT TO BRING YOU A MESSAGE OF HOPE! Harry read no further. There were a dozen like it, only foot-scuffed and ragged, on the floor. His fell among them. The smell in the room was overpowering. Herring, soap made from fish fat. Which did he smell like? Harry wondered.

The film: it was obvious the trouble Goodenough must have had. It was hideous simplification, sociological piety. Weeks of one-night-stands and the pock-marked screen wobbled in the slightest draught, the print was blurred and snowy, the sound-track full of pitchless beeps . . . but these were physical discomforts. They lacked the wonderful unimaginativeness of the film. The director's cameras were superbly unreal, for all their dullness. He had made suggestive juxtapositions, one part of which would cancel out the other: cameras ranging first over the bomb-splintered streets of Warsaw, then with equal stress on well-fed, corn-fed, happy American faces; they stopped, now on the truffle-hog hag scratching for legumes, now on the brick-like backs of Antioch girls jig-sawing debris for one whole happy summer. New walls for old. New wars for old.

Mrs. Hancher will love that, Harry thought. It was the way of our happy, good-natured century; no single thought moved a century as deeply as did what this strip of film "felt" so deeply: that we all need each other. No man is an island in our nickelodeon dream.

The film went on and on. A flashback showed Luftwaffe

dive-bombing technique. Director Georgie Zuckowicz, backed by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, the Legion of Decency, and the Council on International Retribution, had imagined that the German public would flinch before the memory of their own disasters, even if they felt no remorse. But they had not calculated on that immovable German Harry Carey. He and the audience were unaffected, even entertained. These were other peoples' cities. Furthermore, it was sweet of those *Amis* to clean up . . . wouldn't they like to try it on some nice German back yard?

Such international charity warmed his heart.

Meanwhile, fragments of a dialogue between two distinguished visitors at sea were overheard by Harry.

"You've got to get ready for the end of the lecture," said Mrs. Hancher.

"I know that."

"But you really must be there," she insisted, "you remember how they will get at that coffee. . . ."

"I know, Amy."

"Did you tell that harridan at least not to serve until after your speech?"

"No. . . ."

"You didn't!"

"I didn't think. . . ."

"I'll tell her."

Byplay. She rose from her chair by the screen, happy to be of use. Goodenough seemed in a forgiving mood; he forgave her edgy petulant voice, forgave her tangled domestic hair . . . even her sense of his importance. But couldn't she once see it from his side, his silence indicated. Hadn't she watched him set up his stand in empty halls, wait for first customers of hope to loiter in? With the fear inside? How about twenty-three flickering destructions and reconstructions, their weight on him, since he was fool enough to care? Or after meetings, paying off the stay-late

court of panhandlers, collecting the bundles of hopeful leaflets, from the cold wet street carrying in, defaced with crude obscenity, his carefully lettered posters? And the fear?

11

IT WAS Mieke's birthday. The film was just over when she entered the hall, the lights had been switched on. She saw Helmut right away: a scar on his cheek, a thin ornamental scar that turned red if he were disappointed. Helmut believed in living on, a POW returned from Russia, just a boy really, and he said "live". He believed in his future. Here and now. Marriage, to build a house.

A tall man in black, with a big hearty throat and a tiny petulant voice, was addressing the crowd, the speaker, Mr. Chauncey Goodenough, of Philadelphia, USA. Why did she know, from just a look at the man, that the meeting was beginning badly?

She elbowed her way through the crowd to Helmut. A youth was collecting a few pfennigs in a battered hat. A bitter joke lay in the hat: a million mark note from the last depression. She smiled wryly and waved to Helmut. He waved back. The first couples had started dancing. Some of the older people pushed tightly about the coffee urn.

Mrs. Hancher had the youth in her grip, shouting at him in broken German. He cursed freely and tried to shake his arm loose. She twisted it violently by the wrist.

"He's a little thief," Mrs. Hancher screamed, reverting to English in her rage.

"They're mine. . . ."

The quintet ignored the fracas. They played loudly every time she screamed.

"Thief! Horrid little thief!"

"What's he done?"

"Who says they're not his?"

"Judas!"

"Mi-i-ine!"

Helmut stepped forward. Mieke put her arm out to stop him.

"Are they yours?" Helmut asked Mrs. Hancher insolently. She had dragged the squalling boy near them. Helmut's leather coat reached nearly to his ankles and bulged at the knees. Mieke looked over him. He was so small.

"I saw him take them," Mrs. Hancher said with ridiculous morgue. She made a quick movement that spun the boy free, simultaneously reached into the boy's jacket pocket.

"Little filth!" she cried in pain and triumph, brandishing two cigarettes aloft. "And the Church sent you!" She crushed the cigarettes underheel. They were squashed but intact. Helmut finished the job for her, disdainfully leaving two round yellow stains on the boards. He turned to Mieke and and took her by the waist.

"Come on Mieke, dance."

While they danced, Harry heard a dialogue:

"I've told them to stop that music, but they pretend they don't understand." Mrs. Hancher looked up expectantly at Mr. Goodenough. "I'm sure they do. I suppose it would be too much for you to stop them?"

Goodenough shrugged his shoulders.

"How?"

"And that young man with the scar . . . do you know what he said?"

Helmut danced near them, his arm rigidly around Mieke's waist, his free hand clutching a cup of coffee.

"You see? They got the coffee before your speech."

Mr. Goodenough watched the young man with a scar; he was laughing at something the girl said. A laugh about nothing, completely mirthless.

"There's an American here. . . ." Goodenough started abstractly, thinking about the girl.

"A silly fool, too . . . to trust that horrid boy with cigarettes. And cigarettes at ten marks each."

Goodenough overlooked her remark.

"Why do you think he's here, Amy?"

She, too disgruntled to be polite:

"Why are *you* here?"

12

HARRY WATCHED the smile on Mrs. Hancher's face. The smile of twenty-two cities, and many more. A smile she could afford. Not for her to stand up in front of this charming crowd to discourse on love.

The Reverend walked to the lectern in front of the screen and began reading some announcements through the quintet. His German was halting. Why hadn't Goodenough handled his hecklers, thought Harry. Big, well over six feet, quite able to take care of himself. There was something about purity in the Buchman creed. Whatever it was, Goodenough had it. But it was unnatural. The audience was watching him. The quintet finished a number in perfunctory manner, and stopped. Harry offered his chair to a one-legged veteran who sagged into it and spat gratefully at Harry's feet. Goodenough paled and two bright red spots gleamed on his cheek.

"Please. . . ."

A second of silence. One or two couples had begun to dance again.

"Please. . . ."

The trumpeter blew a low, sour note.

"Ruhig. Ruhig."

Mrs. Hancher was turning red. She had gone to the back to dim the lights. The Reverend drew himself up and threw himself into his speech.

All went well for a moment. Then Harry noticed a slight

rhythmical stamp next to him, a persistent knock. His friend the one-legged man.

Goodenough turned to the source of the noise.

"My friend, you might. . . ."

Someone else had started. The Reverend continued speaking, but Harry could tell the trouble had only begun. His own foot itched. The stamping started the coffee urn sizzling. It spat and steamed while the old woman hired for the concession twisted knobs and tried to stabilise the pile of inverted mugs on the table next to her. A thin jet of steam spurted from a vertical glass pipe and she tied a rag around it.

". . . can't help it," she shouted across the noise to Mr. Goodenough. Harry thought she looked very pleased with herself.

"Bravo, old woman!" the scarred man shouted. A burst of mock applause followed.

"You can't help it, old woman?" someone else shouted. "Then we must help you." There was a rush for the urn that nearly capsized it. A woman with a child gripping her hand turned the gas all the way up.

The child started whimpering.

"We belong to no denomination. . . ." He tried to make himself heard.

Harry put his hand on the peggleg's shoulder. He shook it off and maintained his mechanical stomp. Mrs. Hancher bent over the gramophone used to accompany hymns. She cranked. The youth from whom she had taken the cigarettes twisted the head off the arm. She was too busy cranking to notice.

"All we want is. . . ."

"I think it's disgraceful," Harry heard from a middle-aged woman in the crowd. She was running for the door at the back. After all, there were always people in Germany verbally in favour of order.

"We all agree the Germans need. . . ."

Harry winced.

"ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE!"

"Well you fools, are you going to play?" The coffee woman vindictively tore the rag off the spigot and threw the filthy brown cloth at the musicians. It fell suddenly a few feet short of them. The drummer gave a roll on his traps.

"Who took my needle?" Mrs. Hancher lost control of her voice. It wailed far above the Alexanderplatz Shuffle, the newest number from Berlin. "Who took my needle?"

Worn out with stamping, Harry's neighbour stopped, slumped over in his seat, asleep. Harry went to fetch him a cup of coffee. Friend Pegleg put it down by his good leg and let it get cold there. Harry asked him what he thought of all this.

"Young punks," was all he would say.

Whatever Harry felt was well disguised by what people took him for.

Mieke avoided the coffee mug. The old man dribbled in his sleep. She tugged on his chair with her foot.

"You could move it, couldn't you?"

He pushed it with his good leg. It toppled and spilled on the floor.

"Pig."

She turned to Harry.

"Stop her crying. . . ." She pointed to Mrs. Hancher. The American wasn't going to help.

"What's the matter with her?" he asked. "And hello."

"The boy's got her needle."

"Who's got her needle?"

"It's her only needle."

She steadied his hand as he gave her a light.

"You don't really expect me to. . . . Besides, I'm enjoying myself."

She gave a short laugh.

"You . . . an American?"

He gave you the cigarette without your asking, why go out of your way to be unkind? Mieke could have asked herself.

She saw the little boy brandishing his recording head, being toed and chaffed by half a dozen men, whirled and clucked by a gaggle of women, and Helmut fracassing with a drunk, hapless, squealing and clutching his trousers.

"That's Helmut," Mieke said to Harry. "He wants to marry me. He was an officer, now he has other pastimes. . . ." He flung the drunk, a collapsed blatterer, to the floor, tore his coat up, pinning his arms, swung the drunk's head back and forth so that each time it cracked against the base of Mr. Goodenough's lectern. The attention of the crowd was all focused on the gramophone needle. Goodenough stepped between them.

"You ought to be ashamed," he said, forgetting to speak in German. A coffee mug fell, or was thrown. It rolled. The noise died quickly.

"We ought to be ashamed!"

Helmut mimicked the speaker's cry in impeccable English, letting go of the drunk. Mrs. Hancher came up and sniffed the air around him.

Mieke panicked. She hated Helmut in this mood. Afterwards he would always try to make love, more boastfully, more angrily. No, she'd have to say, and she'd hate herself, and he'd hate himself. He didn't have to prove his manhood that way, or prove that he could make his way. She believed him. She believed him. It was just not the way she wanted to go.

She took Harry's arm.

"Let's get out of here, now," she said.

"Shame! Shame!" Several people had caught Goodenough's last words.

"Your friend is coming," Harry answered.

"Who?" Mieke said.

The ex-lieutenant was on them; the scar whitened visibly on his cheek.

"Helmut. . . ."

"I'm not talking to you dear. . . ."

He continued to speak in English.

"Come on," Mieke tugged at the American's arm.

"Come to save us?" Helmut bowed. "Flattered."

"Come on. He wants to show that he can fight in spite of his education. . . ."

Mieke suddenly lost her desire to spare him, to spare the American, or herself.

"That's not a duelling scar, either," she said, pointing to Helmut's cheek. "He had a mole removed, and that is what is left."

Helmut bowed, leather coat belling out beneath him. His blond hair showed thin on top. Without a word he left them. He walked to the back in long military strides. He tarried there, talking contemptuously to a pair of young men by the door. All three of them wore their clothes like uniforms.

Mieke brushed back her hair and smiled at the American.

"You must make me a citizen some time. Then nothing can touch me."

13

HARRY WALKED away from her abruptly. He had lost his patience. Now was the time to get out from under.

"Tell these people to sit down," he shouted to Goodenough. Mrs. Hancher was busy drying her tears.

"We were just going to call you. . . ."

Harry turned his back to her.

"Sit down all of you," he said, facing the crowd. The audience sat down, suddenly, in a great wave, collapsing.

"Why didn't you come before?"

"And stop that goddam machine!"

The coffee woman understood and wrapped her apron around the spigot. The band had already quit. The trombonist unscrewed his mouthpiece.

Harry helped Goodenough adjust the lectern, knocked down in the melee, and restrung the wires of the loudspeaker. Then he helped the drunk to a folding chair and sent Mrs. Hancher for a cup of coffee.

"Would you wipe up that water?" Harry asked when she returned. The water-jug on the lectern had been another casualty.

"Be careful with the glass, Amy. Sit down please, all of you. . . ." Goodenough motioned to the crowd. He and Harry exchanged a brief look. The blind leading the blind.

So this is the raw material, Harry said to himself. I've had it in my hands, caught the temper of the people. What better way than forming part of it? Or had the masquerade fooled anyone? You've got to stop them, Mister American, Mister Authority. Why didn't you come before? Save the day. Like a coward I came out with what I was, or what I thought I was. I dropped the whole disguise, threw off my clothes, and there I was, master of all I surveyed. A physical sensation, but without satisfaction.

Muddy ground, their consent. My order, a shout at an old woman . . . gurgled down in the crowd, used to orders. A few tired boos, thankfully no laughter. But strictly bogus. On my side no real power, on theirs no real rebellion. Abuse on both sides; they merely wanted to see how far they could go. Power had a certain voluptuousness for them. Fifteen years living with it, either the acquiring of it or the submitting to it. Its real nature blurred, and now they are suckers for the first buffoon who comes along and bluffs it. Just satisfy their craving. Obedience was more than enough power. But there was not enough obedience, they wanted more. I was to really cow them.

Goodenough had his arms around Harry's shoulders. Long, heavy, and rather exhausted arms. He and Mrs. Hancher were magnificently grateful.

The Speaker's address began with thanks to his "American Friend"; he had reminded them that they were there on a

mission of peace. Something like that. Harry had edged his way back into the crowd, unappeased. He looked among the crowded faces, in the pleased faces of consent, for something that he had lost. Two people: they knew something about it, about the moment that was gone now. But both the girl and her German friend with the scar had gone.

The one-legged man slept on over his mug of ash-grey coffee, the woman at the urn listened with assent, the orchestra hid among their stands and instrument cases . . . but those two were not among those who quietly applauded the end of Mr. Goodenough's speech. Harry went out in search of them, and he caught up with Mieke near the Hotel Graf Zeppelin.

The night seemed to grow warm before it grew cold. She and Harry were walking towards Rohrbrach on the crown of the Frauenkopf. There was a wood there, full of stumps and ripped ends of wire. They walked on leaves from all winter's falling, and there was a mist below them, patchwork, broken by lights from Stuttgart and the headlamps of the jeep.

"Who gave you the coat?" Harry asked. He sat down on a stump and she leaned over him, seeming taller than ever, and tucked her hair behind her ears.

"Don't talk so much. . . ."

"Was he good to you at least? No, I don't suppose so. . . ."

"No." She looked down at her British Army trenchcoat and tightened the belt around her waist. Then she put her face on his and her hands behind his neck.

"No?"

Harry fingered the lightweight twill and twisted his fingers through the shoulder straps of the raincoat. It was not a reply, to echo her words, to doubt them, to throw them back to her, but it was something he had learned here, in eleven weeks: be cruel first, and think afterwards.

"No," she said, putting her hand over his mouth. "Don't say anything. I will love you, no matter. You would not

understand why. Not now, and perhaps not ever. I know why, and it's all right. No . . . not now. . . ."

"For Christ's sake!" he almost shouted, getting up angrily. "I'm not sorry, why should you be?"

14

WHEN THEY reached Esslingen, the night had turned hoar-cold; rime concealed the many-gabled pyramid facades; vineyard walls showed in white strips like patterns on cloth. Harry ran out of acquaintances and friends one by one finding a place for them to sleep, surprised them in bed, or intruded on their drinking, stayed, and played two hands that got to be four or eight. Mieke leaned on the walls of bachelor flats, watching Harry, waiting. Then Germans: the laundress, Herr Bachmeister and his unpolitical organ who, when he opened the door a crack, pushed his wife behind him, the mother hen's gesture, and kept his robe clutched in one hand around his throat, Frau Unpolitisch Bachmeister, twice her man's size, bulked over his shoulder. . . . No, no one knew where there might be a room. . . . Esslingen crammed with refugees, evacuees, Stuttgartians, worse, *Ausländer*, Silesians, Lithauers. No one knew and some blamed Harry and his bombers for there not being a room: synecdoche, Harry become armadas of the air. Next visit, the Headquarters mechanic who opened the door of his hut behind the CIC building and flooded them with a bright green-shaded light under which four men were playing cards. Mieke stepped in front of Harry to ask in better German. A man inside threw away his cigar butt and shouted an address: they were invited to a *Tanzabend* the following Saturday.

"Tell them I can't dance," Harry said.

"Er kann nicht tanzen. . . ." she said.

Oh yes, he was one hell of an American.

Such a simple thing, a room, walls for privacy . . . the CQ knew of one. It looked out over the rear door of the Enlisted Men's Mess. Harry closed his eyes on the bed. It was a big bed and he was no longer himself or alone. In the room next to theirs were voices, and downstairs, pots and scolding. They had found a home, Mieke and he, at least for the night.

Now she was talking to him in German, waking up cat-like when he turned the light out. She wanted him to understand. . . .

Some time in the middle of the night, she woke him up and turned him over towards her and kissed him, and wouldn't let him fall back into sleep.

"Why am I the way I am . . . if that's not the way I'm meant to be?"

"You are, you are, Mieke. . . ."

Harry turned away; she did not relent.

"And if I am, why aren't you?"

"I am."

"Oh yes!"

She had a laugh that was very high and very happy.

"Oh yes!" he repeated.

"Goodnight, Harry . . . yes. . . ."

She wanted to fall asleep on that. Harry was not as gentle this time, because there was anger at himself mixed in. Really, she refused to understand. She laughed again, just as she fell asleep. She fell asleep so quickly and easily.

Harry only half slept for another hour or two, for then it was five, and the KPs began to roll the GI cans out of the Mess. Steam came from vents in the walls of the building with a smell of warm milk; two fatigue-clad German civilians flushed out the garbage with hot water from hoses. Harry got up. Mieke was asleep on her stomach, her arm on Harry's pillow in a gesture of possession. Harry buttoned up his jacket by the window, watching the line form by the back-door of the Mess, puffing breath unreally into the morning. At the head of the line a corporal inhaled deeply on his

cigarette. Except for him the soldiers all had their hands in their pockets. When Harry had seen the cans filled with hot water, rinsed, turned out in the alley, the water, flesh pink, float in a soapy puddle down the hut-side and slop into the drain, he left.

He had not asked for love. He would send her something. He took a last look at Mieke. It had been something of a victory on her part anyway.

15

BEFORE THE advent of Harry, Mieke had spent many hours with Amalie Winkler. The small stuffy room high in the honeycombed hills of Stuttgart had been the only home she knew. They sat on Amalie's divan watching the weak tea boil on the hotplate. For food they shared half a plate of pork and beans Mieke brought back from her Stars and Stripes noonday meal, eaten cold and soggy.

Amalie was a link with Gottingen, Gottingen was the before to Mieke. As children they carved their love into a stern oak just outside the city: the magic formula M.M. loves A.W. If they had not both been in Stuttgart, quite alone except for each other, they never would have sought each other out. Now it was almost every day they met.

Amalie's father was one of many POWs still not repatriated from the *Ostfront*; her mother had been burned alive in a 10,000 ton raid on Kiel. Amalie was not very intelligent, nor very pretty, but loyal. She lied and pouted, was demanding and possessive, but the magic formula retained its spell. On her walls were rotogravures of the Alps and a photo of two skiers' slaloms on the Zugspitze run. Garmisch often entered their conversation because in the pictures it looked beautiful and clean, and once a lieutenant had promised Amalie a job in a hotel there; but now in their language "You're talking

like the lieutenant" meant "There you go dreaming again!" But much more often they talked of the past, Amalie of her Horst, then Mieke of her Bernhard: a morning in 1942, she fifteen, his leather coat gleaming, crossing the street towards her . . . to have been engaged at Christmas . . . veering away suddenly, turning his back to her, walking away without so much as a look back . . . never seen again . . . an old story.

"War ich eine Bube!" Mieke said, never getting an answer. It was all embroidered in her mind, Bernhard so much clearer than anything since or anything now. Amalie would question her and going too far push Mieke into fits of laughter. The laughter would stay in the room a few minutes, bright, clear; then it would vanish and they would each have a second cup of tea and evoke some other image from the past. But each week recognition became a little harder.

At nine o'clock Mieke would always leave Amalie, because at nine the American sergeant came. She would kiss Amalie on her damp forehead to the sound of his footsteps below, pass him in silence on the empty stairs, and start walking idly down into the dark city. Everything they had said in those few hours would come back to Mieke, and make her laugh again, but it was always a longer walk than she remembered.

The day after the Moral Rearmament meeting was the worst Mieke could remember. The early morning fog never lifted; at ten it was drizzling, at one sleeting. Every crude pass and joke hurt; a high pleased laugh reminded; low urgent notes as trolleys braked on their icy tracks unsettled, ground on her nerves. When the Stars and Stripes Office closed she did not even dare hurry up the hill towards her Amalie.

She was not afraid of being laughed at, because Harry had not done it to laugh at her. She was not afraid, even, for herself. It was a terrible day because she didn't know why Harry had behaved that way, and because she suspected he didn't know. There was something in him that she could not

control, and which even he was unable to master. Why run away?

And then she understood herself, later. She went to a film, an old waltz epic. She ran away. So they both knew it was senseless. They had had something briefly in common in wanting to escape the howling crowd in the smoky hall; they had made the excitement last; then, naturally, it had to fall. He had seen that, and he had gone. She would forget all about him. He was not like the others, not even like the others Amalie talked about for hours, the substance of her conversation. She knew that; she had wrested some love out of him.

Out of habit she started towards Amalie, greatly comforted, but forgetting the sergeant. Mieke found him there, big as the bed, shrouded under a stringy blanket and his GI coat. Too late to back away, Amalie had seen her, slipped on a thin dressing gown, and moved to the divan in the other corner of the room. She made a place for Mieke next to her and darkened the lamp with a shawl over the shade. They sat without saying a word to each other.

A few minutes later the sergeant growled in his sleep, turning his huge muffled body over, and then his head on the pillow, like a loaf of bread rising in a pan.

"Goddam cattle," he said. "Goddam cattle."

"He means us." Mieke giggled.

"Not us," Amalie answered. "We're pigs. Anyway, he doesn't mean you."

"He calls you a pig?"

The sergeant growled.

"Goddam cattle!"

"Tell me. . . ."

Mieke stretched out on the divan. The light from the lamp was in her eyes; she put her head in Amalie's lap. Amalie wound Mieke's hair around her fingers, like silk, into a little tight ball.

"Was he lonely?" Mieke asked.

"They all are. Get so you don't care. Or hate them. . . ."

Mieke started to talk about Harry. Amalie listened, stroking her friend's hair.

"What do you think I think of this lump?"

Meike moved her head to look up at Amalie's face, then to look at the sergeant. Amalie was smiling.

"Harry is not like that."

"Not like that. Ach! All right! He is perfect then!"

"No, you mustn't make fun of me . . . I don't know what you think. . . ."

"Ach, Bube! What I think! Who cares?"

With their talking they woke up the sergeant. He heaved himself up on one elbow. A heavy head, Mieke saw, and dark, very dark and wide eyebrows that seemed to span his whole forehead. She had never looked at him before.

"Emily, come here," he said. "Get that girl the hell out of here."

"Ich kann nicht."

"The hell you can't."

Mieke curled up closer to Amalie.

"Don't make me go. . . ."

"Ssh. . . ." Amalie stroked her head.

"Get her out."

"Don't make me go."

"Ssh, go back to sleep you. . . ."

The sergeant sat up on the edge of the bed.

"What gets into you?" Amalie asked. "You go."

He got up, naked, facing backwards, looking for his pants. He had hair half way down his back; his buttocks were pink and blotched. He found his pants and slipped them on; then he took a step towards the divan. He stood right in front of them, and Amalie's head was at the height of his belly button.

"Don't touch her," Amalie said in a cold fury. Mieke turned her face to the wall, half twisting free of her friend.

"I can't stand her whining. Now get her out."

"You could put some clothes on, you pig."

Mieke began to cry. Amalie tried to pull her back towards her.

"Get her out I tell you."

Amalie laughed to his face.

"This big rag!" he shouted, reaching over Amalie to Mieke, shaking her like a pillow case. "Maybe she understands." His voice was under control, but the corner of his left eye was white and twitched violently. "Rauss! Verstehen Sie? Rauss!"

Suddenly he let Mieke go and hit Amalie viciously across the mouth.

"It's all right," he said. "I'm going." Amalie licked the blood off her lip. Putting on his thick woollen shirt the sergeant knocked over the tea-kettle. Amalie picked it up off the floor, filled it with water from a pitcher, and set it back to boil. Only her hands trembled slightly. Then she took the GI coat off the bed and held it up for the sergeant while he clumsily poked his sweated arms in.

Mieke lay crying on the divan, staring at the photo of Garmisch on the wall.

"He's a fine one, eh?" Amalie said when the sergeant had gone.

"I can't stop crying. I don't know why. I can't stop crying. I can't help it." Mieke coughed. "I've never cried like this."

"He's going home."

Mieke stayed there. She slept on Amalie's narrow double bed, trying to get warm next to her friend, only Amalie too was shivering.

A VERY brief conversation. Harry, seated, in Captain Gollffing's office. It was a quarter to nine. Harry had been walking for two hours, watching the old men of Esslingen pedal to work, shop-shutters squeaked open, a WAC hurrying to six o'clock bedcheck spitting into the canal. It's been a cowardly walk, he thought; he could have stayed in bed. He could have walked, smoked a cigarette, and gone back. He could have woken Mieke up and said something nice, it didn't matter what. She would have laughed, glad to be awake, sitting up in bed and pushing back her hair always falling into her eyes. They could have smoked a cigarette each in bed, and perhaps the desire would have come back.

Instead, this conversation:

"Well, you sure started off well," Gollffing said. "Don't you know? We're trying to make a democracy here."

"The speaker was going to get lynched . . . sir."

"For a difference of opinion? You break up the bloody meeting. Worse than Hitler. That sort of thing."

Harry found it difficult to follow the captain's argument. He listened.

"We had men down there. Nothing happened to him. Nothing would have happened to him. A difference of opinion."

"Yes, sir."

"What do you expect? People to learn?"

"Goodenough was your democrat, Captain. It was his right to speak that was in danger. They were shouting him down, and in a few minutes they would have knocked him down."

"That's their business. No man's prerogative to make an ass of himself. For free."

Harry felt the captain was bringing up a fundamental problem, but as he thought of it himself, he only grew more confused, and, finally, more cowed by its immensity.

What had happened to him at the meeting was simple enough. At a given moment he had found himself swallowed up in a mass passion, and he hadn't liked it. Without his peculiar situation as custodian of moral values for an occupied country, he would have been trampled underfoot (Harry wondered: even in Germany? . . . or would they still have obeyed?).

"Look at it this way, Carey," Gollffing said. "If that bunch is a stinking majority. Rabble. Could you call Goodenough an 'informed minority'?"

"How about me?" Harry wanted to ask. "Wasn't I an 'informed minority'?"

The captain anticipated him.

"As for you, Carey. You don't have any power. Not without me behind. Not without what you're told. If you have no power, you're never an informed minority. Just an eccentric."

17

SUNDAY, THE next morning, and nothing went right. Amalie pouted, wasted half an hour before the bathroom mirror over the sink, picking a pimple. Mieke was in a hurry to be off, but didn't want to leave without finishing about Harry. Her friend had not understood. An old man in a blue Post Office uniform brought Amalie a registered letter. The wrong news about a part in a Hamburg show. Mieke was to blame for everything.

It was the wrong time to talk about Harry.

"Bist du so eine Bube!" She laughed whenever Mieke mentioned his name.

All Mieke could think was: people always judge others by themselves. That's why she can't understand about Harry.

They had a bowl of lukewarm soup each and Mieke started

down into Stuttgart. She kissed Amalie on the cheek as she left, without meaning it, and it didn't seem to make much difference. The last thing Mieke saw of her was the weary gesture of her hands as she tied the twisted silk belt around her thin dressing gown.

The sun fired the steep pitched roofs; steam rose from the slate in curls, like smoke. Above and below her homes had toppled, some had slid downhill with their streets to join the general rubble below. Across the cold brick and metal, like catwalks, lay electric and telephone wires. Mieke liked these waste spaces, bare, the parks' trees cut to stumps for fuel, columns stripped and flaked by fire, besmeared with slogans: CDU, SPD, the red KPD:

KEIN KRIEG MEHR

She liked to linger. As she walked slowly down, the grass that grew in the crevices smelled bitter and strong: there would be rain again tomorrow. Tomorrow was Monday, and if she did not find Harry, it was back to Stars and Stripes, the weary round. She laughed to herself: what if she saw Harry?

She stopped at Kupinger's where she got her mail. There had been a telephone message. She tried to stifle her excitement, then she realised that he could not have known where to reach her. So it was from Helmut. Amalie thought he was wonderfully patient; they all did. No one saw the arrogance behind.

Four o'clock at the Graf Zeppelin. What that message wouldn't have meant to her, even last year! How she would have waited for the hours to pass! He wanted to marry her: Helmut, with his little scar and his big ego, his big scars from the war, his little understanding of defeat. Helmut said you must take hold of "life", build all over again. As though it were there to be taken. Let him stake out in the suburbs where there were no homes going up; let him shop for presents, for holidays, for happiness; let him yearn for the

Alps. Let him take what he could. No more war, there was the slogan again, on the wall of the Opera. Amis go home!

At ground-level the big patch of bald has-been grass and caked mud behind the Opera looked very different from when seen from above. Nothing was very interesting, everything was very much alike. That old man hunted butts, the better ones retailing at four marks, shorter ones one or two, the puddled ones not for sale . . . to be dried at home and smoked for himself. That girl, thirteen, twelve, with high skirt and blue-boned knees, hurried guilelessly home. That boy, bumping his father's briefcase on his back, ran to the toppled columns and fountains for his afternoon death-game. The baby-faced Barbarians swaggered about, their broad behinds pivoting tightly under their Eisenhowers.

Mieke walked in the side-door of the Opera. Upstairs was the Information Service Library maintained for German readers. Re-education to democracy. Some Germans went there to get warm, others to flip through the pages of *Life*, which made it all simple. The miracle of America interested few of the Library's readers. The GYA corporal in charge sorted out his kind of young boys from the other kind. Behind the Library is the Lounge. The gravelly voices of accordions mixed with the metallic clatter of ping-pong balls. The huge velvet curtains hung heavy with dust; the gold-threaded carpet was rolled back against the curving wall. You were in America. A tournament was being played, as every Sunday afternoon. At the furthest table, playing doubles, involved in the feat of clearing his clumsy body from his partner's lunge, was a dark-jowled sergeant, high spots of red on his cheeks. He bumped into one of the ornate columns around the hemispherical room; he balanced on one foot and looked directly at Mieke. He looked after every volley. He missed, cursed; his partner berated him. Mieke started laughing; he concentrated on the game.

When it was over, he walked up to her. The back of his wool shirt was wet.

"Sorry," he said, wiping his brow with a khaki handkerchief. "Big game."

"You played very well."

"Timing's gone."

"No, it was very fine."

"Did you come to see *me*?"

"No. How could I know you were going to be here?" His heavy eyes turned under their lids, looked away.

"I . . . I can't stay tonight. I'm afraid. . . ." She smiled. "I'm sorry," he said again.

"That's all right. You'd better get back to your game."

He looked around again. His partner waved. They were waiting for another round.

"I can't. . . ." He shouted across the room. They ignored him and started volleying.

"You'll catch cold."

"Come on!" The partner shouted, nettled by a ball on the cage.

"I can't. . . ." Then he said to Mieke: "I'm leaving early."

"You're going away?"

"To Garmisch. It's not far."

"That's all right. Go on . . . I like to watch you play."

"Would you like some dinner later?"

"No. I'm meeting someone."

She had spoiled his ping-pong game; now he was being childishly honourable, refusing to play, consulting his watch. His partner called angrily.

"Go on. . . ."

Mieke pushed him by the arm.

Four o'clock. The Graf Zeppelin's concrete facade broke out of the rubble.

That was that. She didn't want to see Helmut. But what sort of weather would there be in Garmisch?

"THE BLOODY pure people."

This was said by a thick, short, thin-lipped captain seated next to Harry when, after the long journey south *through* Ulm, Augsburg and Munich, Harry saw the first abrupt white flanks of the Alps, and the train began pulling slowly up the snow-laden foothills towards its destination at Oberammergau. The captain had muttered it to himself, and Harry let it pass, for the moment, the captain staring out of the window on his own side, inhaling a small cigar in nervous puffs.

Harry went out into the corridor and lowered the heavy window. By sticking his head out, he could see both the locomotive and its two tenders doubling up the slope, parasites on a long white leaf. The train fed on the snow, and he watched the drifts, dirtied with coal-ash, being discharged behind. The captain's words stuck in Harry's mind, the whole image was there. They were sloughing off the lower world, and here, in the bright blue-frescoed white walls of chalets, in clean pine and spruce, in snow and free slope, was mirrored half of the German heart. The mountains said as much, last fastnesses, remote from the sins and destruction of the country below. Who was the captain to understand?

Now they were in the late afternoon sun, and except for the shunting of the changing locomotive at the little Altenau depot, still. He was jostled in the corridor by two unkempt Dependents bound for a Garmisch holiday. The elder of the two women wore glasses festooned with plastic rosettes. Inside Harry's compartment, the captain pulled down the shades on the corridor windows. Harry returned to his seat. Darkness was closing in on the valleys below and behind them. Only the peaks held a little faint light now. The captain puffed on his cigar; Harry thought of his father . . . how stupid to ski in those heights when dark valleys waited below. Again the captain seemed to understand; he said

nothing further, but sat, a dark obese figure, leaning on the arm of his seat, staring silently out.

Then the train drew into Oberammergau. The captain got up abruptly, drew a Valpak down from the rack, and left the compartment without saying a word. He was waiting at the bottom of the steps, however, and helped Harry down with his duffle bag.

"It always looks better up here," the captain said. He smiled. His smile was disconcerting, off-key. Harry looked up and down the platform and breathed in the cold, clear air. He was looking forward to his month in Oberammergau. A friendly corporal drove his jeep alongside them and Harry drove out to the Kaserne in the silent company of the captain and two thin, frightened-looking enlisted men assigned to cadre.

The corporal pointed out sights like a proper guide. That to their right was Anton Lang's Hof, and this, all about them, was Oberammergau, home of the Passion Play. Every tenth year. This year of 1947, there were only the unprofitable passions.

The captain was staring at Harry through the hood of his parka, a round face, uniform and puffy. The Kaserne: the captain fumbled for Harry's hand and shook it hurriedly and weakly. Harry was too surprised to return the greeting. They had another hundred yards to go past the gate-check; the captain huddled in his parka.

In a few moments they stood in a rectangle of white stone lit in the theatrical glare of floods, as though the yard were that of a POW camp. On the white stone walls of the barracks the twin lightning bolts of the SS had not been painted over. In front of the last building of the row was an escarpment, and below, a battle-line of six cannons, tamped.

The friendly corporal pointed to a doorway in a building a minute's walk from the yard and Harry walked part way with him. The captain was fast vanishing ahead of them; the Valpak he carried was like another shadow-officer alongside him.

"Who's that?" Harry asked. The corporal looked sharply at Harry.

"Captain Creeley." He stopped in front of a cavernous door. "You bunk down in here," he said, "until Monday. Monday you'll get more permanent quarters assigned to you." Harry stepped inside. The corporal remained at the door.

"It looks nice. . . ." Harry said. The corporal seemed to want to say something, and Harry didn't want to break off the conversation right then. Besides, Harry felt lonely. He wanted to talk. The corporal stepped inside with Harry. The door opened into a long rectangular room with thick white walls and a long row of bunks, brown blankets stretched tight.

"SS style," Harry said.

The corporal laughed good-humouredly.

"Where is everybody?" Harry asked.

"Friday night, fellow. No one here. Just the CQ. Got to run myself. Can't keep the fräuleins waiting."

"Guess not. . . ."

"It's the coming and going gets them." Harry shrugged his shoulders.

"Creeley's not new here, then?"

"He was here when I got here."

The corporal took Harry to a small window by the door.

"There's a PX on the second floor of that building over there. Ask for Fritz. He can get you a drink." Harry had the feeling the corporal was watching him. "You cold up here?" the corporal asked. "Most people get cold as hell for a while. It's the altitude. Different sort of cold from below."

It was, Harry agreed, a different cold.

"No thanks, corporal, I'll hit the sack. . . ."

"Suit yourself, sergeant, I'll lay mine. . . ."

"Bye. . . ."

Harry dropped his duffle bag on the floor near an empty bunk. He gave a second thought to the drink. It might bring

him back to earth. He pulled a fresh pack of cigarettes from his musette bag, pushed them into his pocket and went out into the first puffs of a scattered snowfall. Already the tracks they had made coming in had faded. He stopped, a few steps out in the great yard. What was that noise? The clamour of boots, heavy steps, commands, rumours, some sound breaking on the shore of the Alps all around? What was it?

19

FOR HARRY, the Kaserne was a new experience. Here he could feel how little they had subdued the country, how little they had even known what they were fighting. Wherever he moved he felt himself on alien ground, usurping a kingdom that not he, but others cherished. In the weeks that followed he was to grow ashamed of whatever they, those who occupied it now, had grafted on to the camp they had found; he resented the PX, the coke machines, the new cots, the occasional comforts of his own country, because none of them fitted. As none of them fitted, neither he nor any of his fellow students (the Kaserne was a CIC Training School) fitted. And when the scale about them was so vast, mountains, the high white walls, the long wide drill field, and the lingering spirit so powerful, Harry could only be uneasy. He seemed, even that first night, to be living on the eve of a counter-revolution, and being alone, or almost alone in the PX, the first battle seemed safely theirs, the ghosts of the SS.

And he was alone. A weary mountain orchestra sawed between its potted palms to the empty PX, and only a British private loitered by the Babyfoot when Harry entered. By mutual consent they played a few games; a box on legs, a ping-pong ball, and eleven players a side whose mechanised bodies are never controlled quickly enough by the handles on which they flip. Harry felt sleepy and giddy from the

altitude; his opponent, pink-cheeked and excitable, jiggled through the motions of kicking the ball in the box; the metal rim on his heels clicked to his every movement. When Harry had lost four games, he asked the disappointed private if they couldn't stop. The private sat down at a table, blinking his eyes dully like a cart horse, and Harry walked over to the fogged-up windows. The lights in the yard still glared. He strained his eyes in vain for a glimpse of the innocent bulk of the Alps beyond.

A drink from Fritz. Fritz was proportioned like a giant, with the exception of a head no bigger or deeper than a round bottle of Kirsch. Harry let himself be led into a room behind the counter, and there handed over a PX coupon for a carton of cigarettes. Fritz returned with a whole bottle of schnapps with a crude cork that smelled of turpentine.

The room contained anonymous shapes, crates, lockers, boxes. The room smelled of iodine. The afternoon, its pleasures, its brightness, was gone. Gone where? Harry squatted on the concrete floor, his back to the wall. The schnapps burned the upper half of his chest and left his belly cold. What had happened to those pure white mountains, those chalets, those slopes, powdered trees, those hopes? He couldn't even remember.

But the more they escaped him, the more urgently he felt a need to find them.

Why was the tension mounting? It should be falling off. Fritz, he thought, this is a phoney schnapps: my head is clear, too clear.

Harry pushed himself to his feet, rubbing his back up the white-washed wall, and walked shakily to the window. Heavy messy snow flakes were falling. He pushed the bottom sash up a few inches. A dark wet wind licked the yard like a tongue.

Someone was at the door of his room.

The crack of light grew on the emery surface of the concrete like a spider's web. For a second or two the room was

illuminated. Harry saw a canvas cot, just a pallet, that he had not noticed before, and in the other corner, a set of wooden lockers. Then the light vanished.

Imagination. He fought off a woollen conviction that he was not alone. A thick flabby web of fur spread over his mind. From the window he stepped back into the room, stumbling over a No. 10 can. In the silence that followed, besides his own breath, he knew that there was someone else in the room.

Harry sat down again, sagging dully at the knees. Whoever it was squatted next to him, breathing easily. A pin-point of light seemed to breathe with his visitor, perhaps a cigarette . . . he could not be sure. Harry thought he made out a long heavy beard lying flat on a man's chest.

It was a cigarette. Suddenly the sucked-in glow of it lit up the man's face. The beard was a long, hideously extended under-lip, stiff and smelling faintly of make-up cream. The stranger was speaking in German; the beard moved in time with his speech; the cigarette glowed and darkened on a rhythm of its own. Harry sat quietly and listened. A compelling voice, soft and resonant. About the war, himself and the war, himself and the war and Italy. Did Harry regret missing it was one thing the man asked. No Harry did not regret missing it. So you did miss it, the voice asked again. Yes, he had missed it. Then Harry must be afraid of death. You're right. Ah, some men are, some are not. The voice took on a tinge of sadness. Harry offered the bottle to his guest, but a hand pushed it away.

From the man's pocket, a flat thin object, a wallet. Harry was thinking about the beard, but it was hard to think. Beards? The Passion Play. Christ. Not Christ. An apostle. The one that carried baskets of fish, or was it loaves of bread? Then the bearded man struck a match and held it over the wallet, but in front of Harry's eyes so that Harry was blinded. The stranger disappeared behind the flickering yellow flame. Then slowly, the stranger pulled the match down to the pocket, as though he were moving something exceedingly

heavy. It burned out in a puff of blue flame. The man swore gently and lighted another

It was a photograph. A photograph of himself taken in Italy, during the war. Not in uniform. Without a beard. Wearing shorts and leaning self-consciously against a parapet or low wall, legs crossed before him.

Someone else opened the door.

"Get out," hissed the bearded man. Harry thought he had seen Creeley.

"Yes," the bearded man went on when the door closed quietly, "I was there, and I was here. I was here when they built this Kaserne."

"What do you do?" Harry asked. "A drink?"

The stranger refused the bottle again.

"I work here."

"Oh?"

"I work upstairs."

Harry felt particularly stupid. I ought to stop drinking, he said to himself. Apparently out loud, because his guest gave a slight start.

"What was that?"

"I said I ought to stop drinking."

"Oh . . . I teach anyone who wants to know how to carve things." He stopped. "That was me in the photograph." He showed it again to Harry, lighting another match.

"You look younger. . . ."

"That is only the beard."

Harry shrugged.

"You're in the play?"

"I am hoping to play Saint Peter."

"Saint Peter!"

"What are you laughing at?"

"I have never been to Italy," Harry said.

"Neither have I. . . ."

"But the photograph?"

"That was not me."

The bearded man talked extremely close to Harry's face. The grease paint was very strong; his breath was sweet.

"I wasn't here either. I wanted to see what you would say."

"I wish I were in Italy."

Another pull at the schnapps, the last one. The bottle was half empty. He thought he heard a sigh from his companion.

"Wasn't that Captain Creeley just came in?"

"Which captain? What are you talking about?"

The man's voice changed completely. It was so high now that it seemed too high to remain up there.

"Listen Simon Peter. . . ."

Harry shut his eyes.

"No one came in."

"I saw him."

"No. There was no one." The bearded man rose gracefully to his feet. "You will come and see me, won't you?"

Harry struggled to get up. The bearded man put his arms around him and lifted him easily.

"Would you like some air?" he asked. He spun around quickly and pushed Harry's slightly-lifted window wide open. The cold air burned into the room. The bearded man stood looking out of the window into the snow.

20

HARRY LEFT the bearded man standing by the window and went back into the PX. Creeley was there, sitting at a table, alone. He smiled to Harry and Harry sat down with him.

"Mister Carey, what a pleasure. . . ."

The voice was the same as he had heard on the train, thin, dry, high.

"Try this. It's better than Fritz's schnapps." He snapped his

fingers and one of the Germans brought a small glass and a cut-glass bottle.

Harry watched the door of the back room. No one came out.

"How did you know my name?" Harry asked.

"I asked. I'm Captain Creeley."

He offered Harry a cigarette.

"What is it?" Harry tilted his glass.

"Kirsch. And you don't swallow it. You sip it."

"Thanks."

He looked at the door again.

"He won't come out now. That's his room. He sleeps in there. . . ."

"Friendly."

"Not really. But he was probably glad to talk to you. He showed you his picture?" There was a silence. "Wasn't he?"

"He was."

Creeley looked offended.

"You'd think . . ." Harry began.

"Think what?" Creeley cupped his ear.

"I was going to say you'd think that he would know—whatever it is—it's gone. . . ." Harry felt unsteady. The Kirsch was too sweet.

"Ah, you felt it. The Kaserne." Creeley sounded excited. Harry heard him through a thin haze. "A lot of them feel that way about it. Four or five work here just to be in the Kaserne. They invite their friends up from the village. They never left."

"Why?" Harry asked bluntly.

"The clash of bodies—you understand. . . ."

Harry shook his head.

"Can I get another?" The captain poured for him.

"It was the best part of their lives. No, perhaps you wouldn't understand. Here they marched the men, without any special equipment, on a night like this—five miles before letting them back in under their one blanket—an hour later, they'd

get them up again—this time after each other with bare knives—back to bed, to tumble out at dawn, sleepy-eyed, on the parade field, by the hour, by the minute, counted out, moulded. *No sentiment about the war. They took everything out of a man he might have cherished.*”

Creeley paused.

“I see you don’t understand. Some men love to give themselves up.”

“*He* may be sorry. . . .” Harry motioned towards the door. “But you’re not, is that it?”

Harry looked up at Creeley, and the captain seemed momentarily embarrassed, as though he had gone too far.

“It was an ideal, Mister Carey. The Germans are idealists. Not half-way people like ourselves. Ideals don’t come—or go—easily. The idea, the ideal, was conquest. The men were not allowed out of the Kaserne . . . ever. It might have been contamination for them. What happened? These buildings are full of love stories. That is why they come back here. That’s why they work here. That’s not disappeared.”

What did the captain know about it? Creeley overlooked Harry’s remark the first time, and when he pugnaciously repeated—an ambiguous manner of speaking—just where did Creeley stand in all this . . . can’t be sure the captain isn’t speaking of himself. . . .

“Perhaps,” Creeley answered dryly.

“Perhaps,” Harry guffawed. The clash of bodies! Creeley waited for him to subside.

“What if I were to tell you. . . .”

“Don’t tell me his story, Captain. Don’t. I don’t want to hear his story. Never been to Italy. Don’t you regret not being in the war. . . .”

“Shall we get out of here . . . will you join me?”

One of the Germans helped Harry down the stairs. They walked on the fresh snow to a building on the edge of the compound. The cold air gave Harry a rash access of energy. He plunged ahead of the captain.

"You're rather insulting, you know."

"Yes, sir. . . ." Harry muttered sarcastically.

Creeley pattered behind him in silence. Several times Harry *stopped to let Creeley catch up to him. At the barracks door Creeley was out of breath. Harry was swallowing great gulps of thin cold air.*

"I'm not as young as you, don't forget."

"Couldn't we put it off till tomorrow? I'm tired."

Creeley looked so crestfallen that Harry stayed.

They went, Creeley leading, up one short flight of stairs, into a barracks as deserted as the others. Creeley had two rooms: a bedroom and an office. Harry followed the captain right into the bedroom. It had been lived in for some months at least: a large radio, red blankets on the bed, a deep carpet, pictures on the wall, a comfortable armchair. Creeley saw Harry looking around.

"I could get you in this barracks," he said.

"The CQ said we'd be assigned quarters Monday." Creeley shook his head.

"That's right, on Monday." The captain sat down on the bed and reached into a cabinet by the armchair. "More Kirsch?"

"I'm sorry I was rude," Harry said.

"Have one. . . ." Creeley handed Harry a glass.

"I'm sorry I was so bloody rude. . . ."

"Forget it."

Creeley talked smoothly on, Harry paying no attention to the first part of the story. All he heard was the bearded man's name: Bernhard Freihausen. Enlisted, or told to enlist, or tried to enlist in 1942 . . . into the SS. Nineteen then. Now twenty-four.

"My age. . . ." Harry muttered.

"Really? You are just twenty-four?"

Harry leaned back on the captain's sofa and put his head against the wall. It felt fresh, clean, and cold.

"Are you cold?"

Creeley handed Harry the glass he'd been holding in his hand. Harry did not want another glass. He wanted his head to clear, to stay clear. Something in Creeley's voice made Harry feel he had the captain at bay. Lips thinner than on the train, sharp pink lines in the smooth pudgy skin of his cheeks; they tightened occasionally on his small thin cigar, curling inwards like flesh-coloured mangles on a washing machine. Voice thinner. Creeley diminishing before his eyes.

"You've been here before, haven't you?" Harry asked.

Creeley went on smoothly with his story:

"You wouldn't begin to understand. . . ."

"Don't ignore me," Harry muttered under his breath. Creeley was very bland.

"At the end . . . remember? The last stand was to be in the Alps. They burrowed Messerschmidt's rocket factory a mile and a half into the mountain not five hundred yards from my window. . . ." A pudgy finger accompanied the words pointing to the deep embrasure in the white front wall. Harry stared silently into his glass. "Mussolini to flee Turin for the North, the psychological last stand, hung on meat-hooks, kicked like a sponge rubber ball; Hitler in the bunkers. One with the great caravan of *fascisti* halted by the dullest, most routine patrol; the other behind wooden panelling, a huge door, the tiny man. No last stand. But it was to have been here. The great dream was meant to go up in puffs from these Alps. Idealists. Yes, idealists."

Creeley giggled absurdly, the whole argument collapsing on Harry's silence like a sweet in the mouth. Then, priggishly, with obstinacy:

"You're younger than I thought, Mister Carcy, if you want some *human* reason for what went on here. . . ." The word seemed incommensurably evil. "The Germans are expert at avoiding that sort of thing. They have ideals, abstract ideals. I first saw this place from above . . . long ago. White walls, white roof . . . white snow. Have you ever

heard of the old Norse sacrifices, at the solstice, huge pagan rituals . . . Bernhard. . . .”

Creeley was hurrying his words.

“I don’t want to hear your bloody story, Captain. I . . . don’t . . . want . . . to hear . . . your story.”

“Bernhard. . . .”

Creeley was leaning forward on the bed, twisting his cigarillo in his fingers, crushing it furiously.

“I don’t want to hear your story. . . .”

“It was early spring.” The captain went on, ignoring Harry completely. “His mother defied the order to bring nothing. She forced him to carry a sandwich bag on his lap which, after the last acid apple, he chucked under his seat in shame. Soldiers in the compartment, sent South to Regensburg before shipment to the Ostfront . . . their private jokes, the flush of victory. They wouldn’t talk to him. Those were the days. At Nürnberg the soldiers changed trains. Alone again. Travel was restricted. No tourists thronged to Oberammergau or Garmisch that year. The soldiers had the flush of victory all to themselves. The platforms, everywhere, dull and deserted.

‘The hour of triumph’, as Herr Goebbels liked to call it, was not in the hand.

“Arrival. He was not met, like you and I were. He walked to the Kaserne, ignorant, willing. He arrived, was admitted, told to wait. So he waited. He waited in one of these barracks. But it was we who put in the windows. Before, the snow didn’t blow in only because the walls were three feet thick, but the cold penetrated. The cold blew in. The cold was in the walls. Some things we haven’t changed. Something you’re used to that you’ll have to learn all over again here: the johns and their bloody white porcelain rails. No sitting, no squatting, no time lost, nothing to yourself. . . .”

“If you don’t mind, Captain, I don’t feel well.”

Creeley lighted another cigarillo. Harry felt powerless to move.

"I'll go on."

"I'll lie down. I don't feel well."

Harry lay down. His mind was whirling. The rest of the story rose, as in a dream, from the congested smoke of the captain's room, summoned out of grey layers settling thickly on the carpet, a thick jumble with his own life.

Insistent voices: their high, shaven heads clustered around the shutterless windows. Chorus: Now it will be thirty laps if your cap is not on right. It is 120 metres a side. 480 metres. 14 kilometres. Can you run that far? What's the furthest you've ever run? What? You've had no supper? You're hungry? A tall non-com strides from the window, swastika shining on his shoulder patch. He has a wise and kind face. Can you climb that mountain before dinner? The sun goes down suddenly, like a light put out. A moment of silence. The wise and kind non-com advises Bernhard to give them what they want. The circle closes in about him. Easy play, stripped, defenceless.

Suddenly Creeley threw open the window. Harry came to with a start. The captain seemed to be talking very soberly now.

"You may meet Gunther von Kreilsheim some day. He commanded the camp. He lives in the French Zone. Near Waldkirch."

"Yes?" Harry turned over on his side.

"I'm sorry you had to take it this way, Carey. . . ."

"Nothing personal."

"Do you feel all right?"

"I'll be OK."

Harry struggled over to the window. He cracked a second window open to the cold, leaning half way through the wall. Creeley went on talking, but Harry was past listening. The window no longer looked out over the yard, but on what seemed to be the back of the camp. There was a high wall, very little moon. The snow had stopped.

"Are you listening?"

Harry shook his head.

"Are you all right?"

"I feel fine. . . ."

Creeley turned up his collar and wet his thin lips.

"What happened?" Harry asked.

"He stopped them, von Kreilsheim. The commandant was an extraordinary man——"

"What happened?"

"You had better go back to your barracks, I think."

"I'll go back. Now tell me what happened."

"Yes. Now, shall I walk back with you?"

"Thanks, I can manage," Harry answered sarcastically.

The Kaserne was full of ghosts, dull tramps of boots, shouted commands, sword play. Harry stood outside Creeley's door ankle deep in snow, watching the trucks reel up from the village, the dull gleam of their headlights like drunken spears on the powder. They moved noiselessly on the fresh fall.

Last stragglers in, the MPs stopped saluting the darknesses inside tarpaulins and winterised jeeps and shuffled out of their white boxes to join the thinning groups of soldiers muffled in heavy overcoats, dispersed into doorways, about to fall on to their bunks and sleep, sleep completely. Everything looked much smaller in the yard with the gates shut and the trucks lined up against the wall. In the space of minutes the area was in deep silence. The mountains swallowed up the camp as the last lights went out.

Only Harry stayed up, huddled in a door-frame, his head suddenly frighteningly clear, feverish and cold. It should have been much better. The mountains had promised better, much better.

Before that afternoon he had never seen Creeley, or spoken to Bernhard. Yet it was more like remembering than seeing for the first time.

The bloody pure country was far, far behind.

A LETTER from Harry. A letter from Garmisch. From the Schneefernerhaus on the Zugspitze, world's highest hotel. Mieke half ran to Amalie to tell her.

"Coming here?" Amalie asked. "That's fine. And I suppose you'll throw yourself at him?"

Mieke was much too excited to sit down.

"I don't care. I don't have your high principles," she answered.

She laughed at those "high principles", running down the hill as fast as she had run up. Gone was that era of endless Sundays, the one in particular she shared with Amalie. Was she throwing herself at him? Hadn't *he* written her? "I'll be in Stuttgart next weekend; I hope to see you," she quoted it to herself again. A long letter, full of strange words in incorrect German: that *Verantwortlichkeit*, so direct in German, answerable to someone or something. The few words addressed to her giddied her so that the philosophy baffled her. Irritated her: men are like that, she said, unable to say anything simply. She imagined having said it to Harry in the simplest way possible, but he, being a man, an American too (did that count for very much?) hedged himself around with precautions. Yes, precautions, such was the nature of those fine words.

Reaching the Opera, she saw him immediately, standing. The moment she stood next to him she no longer felt so big herself, so awkward. But she could never tell about Harry: one moment he looked deeply interested, the next it was as though she didn't exist. His attention wandered. It was like his letter—she was suddenly stopped in mid-thought—it was hard to tell what he was thinking.

The windshield on the jeep had iced over; Harry scraped it off, and the motor warmed up. He slipped an extra parka over her shoulders and she drew the raincoat collar up around her neck and waited for him to get in beside her. He took her

hand and she tilted her face upwards towards his. She contented herself with noting that she must not look as though she half trusted him and half didn't. You have to trust him, she said to herself. Responsibility was his; she held on to his hand. Leaning across him, she switched on the lights, for it was already dark at five. A hundred yards beyond them, at the gate, two white-helmeted MPs waving their flashlights formed the first points in a long line of newly planted beeches that diminished in darkness towards the station.

"But where are we going?" he asked.

"Sssh. I know. . . ."

He laughed. He could be nice when he laughed.

"I don't think you do. . . ."

"We are going to my room this time. Is that all right?"

"Yes . . . we should have before——"

"You're wrong. It was the way it should have been. That way you were you, and I was me, and we had nothing before and nothing ahead. This . . . you'll see, this is different. At least it has a past."

"A nice portable past."

"Just a past, Harry. Promise you will not make jokes and you will not just keep quiet. Say something nice."

He laughed. How nice he could be when he laughed!

A dead end. They stopped in a hollow dominated by the ruin of a great round brick-kiln. Unhinged concrete slabs and wire mesh sprouted like metal cactuses from the rubble. Her house was quite alone, almost disquietingly intact.

She led him through a dark hallway. Harry followed her in and they climbed four flights of narrow stairs in total darkness. A figure, bundled in blankets, seemed to grow out of the darkest corner of each landing, and a reservoir of water dripped with insistent slowness above them.

"You see," she said. "It's nice to be alone. It is very exclusive up here." Unpredictably she stopped Harry on the top landing and kissed him. "Now I am talking too much. . . ."

"You're eloquent. . . ."

"Don't make fun, Harry. Not always."

"Just a joke. . . ."

"Like the man who wanted twenty-five scrip dollars for my room. He asked me if I didn't like the view!"

They were walking down a corridor, even darker than the stairs. At the end was a cup and tallow candle, and behind that, in the shadows, a stool, a box underneath filled with sand.

"That's too goddam much. And where do you get scrip?"

"Too much for a bed? More than you would pay? What do you have at your home?"

"I have a room. In my mother's house."

"Does it have a bed?"

"Yes."

"What sort of bed?"

"Just a bed."

"This is my room."

Harry looked around, now that she had turned on a light. Her bed took up two thirds of the room. The other third: A grey porcelain bowl in one corner, with a shelf of cooking utensils over it, a tiny table with a hotplate next to a few books, a piece of string behind the door from which hung five hangers, and now, the raincoat. He and Micke were giants. His parka on the bed seemed to fill the entire room.

"Are you tired . . . you look a little tired . . . from work I mean. . . ."

"No, that doesn't count for much. It is a charity. Major Stamm is a kind-hearted man." She spared him nothing, Harry thought.

"You can sleep here?" He had forgotten that she might be proud of her room.

"It is pretty good, don't you think?"

"You're lucky. . . ." Lucky . . . no, that's what you're not. "I see you can drive a jeep. . . ." he said, to change the subject.

"The lights you mean?" she answered simply. "It is not the

first time that I was in a jeep, if that's what you mean." Harry didn't laugh, and she added awkwardly: "Did you think it would be?"

She turned on the hotplate and it glowed warmly.

"Coffee?"

Suddenly from her confusion Harry was able to grasp a single fact: his Mieke was young. She was very young. Much younger than he had ever thought. He sat down on the bed, and she beside him; they waited for the coffee. It was slightly burned and bitter.

The single light in the room went out. They were left looking at each other in the after-glow of the hotplate.

"One o'clock," Mieke whispered loudly. She dropped her voice. "Every night they cut the electricity from one to four."

Harry got up and went to the tiny window.

"Not a light."

"I know it without looking. I've seen it many times."

He rested one knee on the corner of her bed; then, as she took his hand, fell heavily beside her. She buried her head in the pillow.

"Harry," she said. He did not hear her, or he was just very quiet, very still. She said his name again and she felt his big hands searching for her head under the pillow. They found her and turned her around to face him.

"Harry?"

"What is it?"

He kissed her lightly, brushing her cheek with his, and then letting her head fall back with his on to the pillow. She knew he wouldn't understand if she put it in words; they didn't even have a language in common.

She drew her feet up under her. The room had grown very cold.

It was an endless journey for both; she tenderly pushed his head down and herself drew up until she leaned on the cold wall behind the bed. When he kissed her she could not

stifle a cry of pain and after she could only cry with relief. She touched her hands lightly to her stomach, drawn tight and blue, and pushed her fingers through his taut curly hair.

Then Harry stopped, a hesitation . . . and everything stopped, except her crying. She shivered and put her hand out. The coils of the hotplate were cold. The darkness made the cold more penetrating. It was like no cold she had ever known.

Then he flung at her:

"What have you got to cry about?"

He rose roughly from the bed. He hates me she thought, he wants an easier way to say it.

"Go on," she said helplessly. "Go home. I won't cry."

"I haven't done anything, have I?"

"No, you haven't done anything. Go home, Harry, go home. Quick."

She closed her eyes when he had gone. After a long time in which she knew he was picking his way down her stairs, she heard the motor kick over, cough, go dead. She got up and listened by the window, but it faced the wrong way. She couldn't call him back. Then the motor took and she knew it was idling on the choke, and in a minute or less he would be gone.

22

A LONG wait for the Saturday night festivities to begin. There they were, some forty, in a hotel with five times the capacity, like first-class passengers in mid-winter on the Atlantic, shuffling about an empty shell, anxious for revelry. Orchestra, floor show, tuxedoed manager, hostesses, manicurists, bell-hops: all did their best, their loudest, noisiest, fulsomest best, but no one joined in. Paper hats were distributed during the main course; few put them on. Were amateur performers requested? Singers lost their voices, magicians their tricks.

The void of the shadow-filled dining room made for loud echoes; conversation carried, so few spoke. The guests laughed, but without pleasure; listened, but too anxiously. They were 12,000 feet up from the sound of war, and not accustomed to peace.

The weather had muffled the expansive high spirits of a week-end away from thankless routine. Dull meagre clouds around the peaks kept the skiers in, marred tempers; then intermittent snow and mixed rain and mist floated in an eerie horizontal during the afternoon as the wind shifted over the col from the Austrian plains and blew down the glacial strid below the Schncefernerhaus. Now that night had come on, the wind brought back the cold; beyond the dining-room windows the snow fell into dark buffetings of wind below. All flakes seemed to fall an added distance, further than in daylight, making, between the lower world and the hotel, yet another dimension to navigate.

Here Harry had come on a second pass, preferring the fastnesses of the Zugspitze to the noisier circuits in gay Garmisch below. The height had its effect on all of them, depressing some; others were arrogant for having conquered the altitude. In circumstances of simulated joy, real distance, very real distance, and questionable loyalties . . . what better place for Harry to make the acquaintance of Larry Porteous?

It was Larry Porteous who made the advances towards Harry. He had been given Harry's name by Captain Creeley, so he said.

"How is the captain?" Harry asked, conscious of a pair of small hands on the high back of his chair.

"He says you don't like him. . . ." Porteous looked at Harry with a little too much ready shrewdness in the eye.

"Your guess is as good as mine," Harry said, half standing up. Porteous ignored Harry's rude answer.

"You can leave your table, can't you? Join us. . . ." He led Harry over to the opposite side of the dining room.

"Miss Stockley . . . Mister Carey." An English girl, a shock of disturbed reddish hair and a broad, plain face.

"Miss Gadegaard . . . Mister Carey. Mister Johnson. Sergeant . . . I'm sorry, Sergeant?"

"Belt," the master sergeant said. He was in his middle fifties; a pair of tiny twinkling eyes were the only life in his face.

"Are you a spy too?" the Danish girl asked, winking broadly at Porteous.

Mister Johnson had risen from his chair in his best State Department style.

"Sit down, Carey. . . ." Porteous said. Harry did as he was told. His host ordered the wine, slightly warmed, the bottle only. Harry observed, on his tiny fingers, next to the gold tie-clip gleaming on the uniform, fingering the buttons of his shirt, two heavy gold rings, too heavy for his fingers, catching the light as he moved.

Porteous was smiling and talking to the English girl; whenever he stopped, she would smile and redden. She would answer his questions tentatively and inaudibly, and tug at her blouse from under the table. Porteous changed his approach several times a minute; she seemed to lag always one change behind. Charm he lavished on her, but his changes, all in the flicker of his greenish eyes, were unkind. He was conscious of doing things well, even unpleasant things, like conversing with her. Fastidious and coarse, and insulting too, since he implied that she did the same things so much less well.

The wine came and Porteous poured. Grace Stockley saw a chance to bring her conversation with Porteous to an end.

"Pengskapost," she put in, turning to the Danish girl.

"Pengska what?" Porteous stopped pouring and looked right at Harry.

"I think that's what it is. It was on a pillar box. You put pennies in it. Perhaps it was Norwegian.

"Miss Stockley is speaking Danish to you," Mister Johnson truculently informed Miss Gadegaard.

"Ooh!" Miss Gadegaard turned around.

"That's all right," Porteous said. "She doesn't know a word of Danish. . . ."

"But I do." She was hopelessly defending her sally. "Mange tak. Mange tak. Isn't that right?"

"Oh, but it was very good," Miss Gadegaard answered. "Very good. Wasn't it Sergeant," she giggled, making up to the master sergeant who sat stonily opposite her.

"If you say so, miss."

"Thank you, Sergeant," Grace said bravely.

Harry watched her. On her face was such enthusiasm and interest, such confusion and helplessness, all run together; her skin grew blotched and mottled, as though all the emotions contested each other right there, in plain sight of all. Harry wondered how he could show his sympathy.

Mister Johnson tactfully started to tell about his struggle with learning Russian. Then Sergeant Belt told his anecdote about a Russian officer in Berlin. He told it awkwardly, and everyone felt rather awkward because they had read the same joke in the January *Reader's Digest*.

Grace Stockley had changed from the morning. On the terrace that jutted from the south face of the hotel she had made no appeals to anyone, not even the mute kind she now addressed across the dinner table to Harry. The sky was dull and grey when she had come out at about eleven in a small body of trippers, mostly women, too heavily dressed. She wore a loose tweed overcoat, coloured indefinitely, like herself. It billowed around her shapelessly, though tied at the neck with a rough yellow scarf. She had owned the coat for ten years, and only this year was its bell bottom fashionable. Her legs in heavy woollen stockings were encased in a bulky wool skirt; from the thinnest point at her neck she bulged into a general untidiness, but there was no appeal. She sat down on the parapet wall, watching the few skiers muck their way through the thick fleshy snow, every now and then turning her face into a breath of moist wind.

Harry approached her, moved by a vague sympathy for the ugly and forlorn. She was easy to talk to, but from the first she rejected unhappiness. To hear her, all was very well with the world. She was neither ugly nor sad. She did not need Harry. So she talked, this high-school-girl babble, filled with Englishisms: "Jolly D", "Absolutely sick-making".

She wanted to ski; he held her plump hand a minute and watched her disappear into the ski room. The professional stood unwillingly looking down the long shell of a slope. His brown lined face peered out of a tight white sweater with a red shield. A minute before he had been wincing as the English girl stumbled down the stone steps with her skis already on, not even trying the steps sideways. Now, after re-strapping her right ski, he was showing her how to bend her knees. Then he sent her down the incline, alone. Remarkably she stayed upright, slowly, like a sailboat, up to her bootlaces in snow, and only at the bottom of the run sagged and puffed into a wet drift that stopped her.

Harry watched her toil up the hill. Several times she started to slide backwards and the snow squeezed into her gauntlets as she dragged herself to a halt. Then she had to shake the gloves out and brush the damp from her coat. The instructor took a few steps down from his conversations and gave her his hand. He demonstrated the herringbone and how to stop, pushed her off again, and watched her skis smother to a stop, criss-crossed. She seemed to sink into the snow.

She had refused his sympathy, but who else was likely to give her any?

The whole scene came back to him as he listened to Porteous, who still baited her over the Pengskapost.

"But you put pennies in it," Grace protested.

Was she so helpless that she didn't see how her protests titilated him? Harry interrupted them.

"Come on, you two. How was the skiing this afternoon?"

Grace looked at Porteous and burst out laughing.

"He fell down!"

Porteous looked irritated.

"The snow is so wet the skis just won't move. It's damned dangerous."

Poor aimless girl! Harry had tried to save her and she'd opened another gash in Porteous. He was not the one to admit having floundered or fallen down.

She was only too happy to. She was all falling down, always. Oh, she could laugh about herself! Just as she had done that morning, on her second descent. Come up to the top of the rise, she looked up at Harry for a sign of mutual good-humour. Harry didn't respond. He wasn't to be had for laughing. But Porteous was there, grinning broadly and looking down at the heavy gold wrist watch under his right wrist. After lunch he and the English girl cable-carred dizzily to the Zugspitze's misty summit, a trip few chose to undertake with such a low ceiling. They returned an hour later, gaudily swinging down as the overcast broke, she babbling of having seen three countries and Porteous of Salzburg, the Archbishop and Mozart.

Dinner was when he next saw them, watching them first from his own table, and now mixed in with Porteous' heavy humour and crude cruelty. He vowed his charity to her, she was so defenceless. Porteous despised her and he was uneasy at Porteous' absolute arrogance. She had let herself in for the first, and there was no avoiding the second . . . but for Porteous to ridicule her . . . Harry was so sure that Grace understood her own futility that Porteous' wanton insistence angered Harry. He was amazed at the girl's courage, and then reflected that it must be little more than stupidity to submit, brave and oblivious. Porteous twisted words into her; ultimately they were in such baldness and bad taste that the whole table was embarrassed, and the master sergeant, flustered, suggested that they dance. He offered his hand to Grace . . . the rest of them licked their dessert plates in silence while Porteous noted slyly to Mister Johnson that the

two of them, Grace and Sergeant Belt, were hardly a pair of beauties.

As ill fortune had it, when Sergeant Belt made his offer, there were no other dancers. Belt was tall, heavy, gnarled. His hips creaked out of his pants like a bolt from its bark; his hand lay, clumsy but kind, like an awkward enemy on the silk of her dress. She in turn moved gracelessly, adapting herself to his faulty rhythm, sidling, shuffling, and naturally, everyone stared.

Miss Gadegaard, if she was stupid, was also sensitive to such an easy challenge. She persuaded Porteous to dance and they whirled smoothly and easily next to the sergeant. Harry got up and cut in on the sergeant.

"Let's sit down," Grace said. "You don't want to dance."

"But I do. . . ."

"All right, you do, but please let's sit down."

Two bottles of champagne appeared and they all drank a toast.

"Well, look at that," Porteous pointed to Grace Stockley. She was swallowing a second glass as rapidly as the first.

"Here's to unrequited love!" Johnson proposed his toast to a table suddenly become silent.

"I hope you're used to it, my dear," Porteous said. Harry flushed at the endearment; Grace was pouring herself a third glass.

A master of ceremonies, white as a grub, appeared at the far end of the dining room in a halo of spotlights.

"The De Ross Sisters. . . ."

The sisters pranced in to the applause of the MC and the orchestra. The dining room seemed emptier than ever. Grace drank down two more glasses during their crooning.

The MC began his spiel about the magician Zanquini. Grace announced that she was not feeling well.

"I'll take you up to your room," Harry said. She smiled to him, pale and green.

"Thank you."

"Will you be all right if you stand up?"

"I think so."

Harry helped her up. Her voice was thick. It seemed to cause her pain to answer his questions.

"I don't drink very often. . . ."

"Don't talk," Harry said. "Let's get out of here."

"Come back down after," Porteous said. He played with the stem of his glass, tapping his small fingers against the bowl. Miss Gadegaard waved a victor's hand at Grace and Sergeant Belt stood up. Porteous waved with the Danish girl, the heavy gold ring gleaming through the fringe of the ornate table lantern.

"Let's go," Harry said, leading the way.

23

HE HAD to bear Grace's entire weight on his arm, and the way to her room was through several doors, down long corridors with coconut matting, and up several flights of lye-smelling stairs. At the top of the second flight, she vomited; a half minute later she had stopped shaking, only could not go on. She half-slid limply down a few steps to get away from the mess.

"Let me rest a minute," she said.

Harry stood above her and looked down her back as she doubled over to bring the blood back to her head. Her skin was a dull grey; her shoulders, soft, limp. She had a sharp ridge of spine down the back of her dress; otherwise she was colourless flesh and taffeta. He thought he heard her call his name.

"I don't even do this well," she said.

Harry admitted it. It was easier talking to her back.

"You must hate me for doing it so badly."

"No."

"Sure?"

"Sure. . . ."

She made an effort to lift herself up.

"I think I'll try to go now. I feel a bit better. You go downstairs to the party."

"I'll come up with you. . . ."

She turned around on the step, but without getting up.

"You don't have to."

Harry stepped down to her, bent down, and let her slip her left arm over his shoulder. Then he took her hand in his. Both their hands seemed unnaturally cold.

"We have to get you into bed. . . ."

More and more of her weight fell on him. A waiter with a tray passed them in the passage and Harry asked him to open the door for them, but the waiter pretended not to hear. Seconds later Harry heard him curse as he passed the vomit on the landing.

He helped her in and eased her to the bed. Then he undid the imitation pearl choker around her neck and took off her shoes. She twisted feverishly on the fluffy eiderdown.

"Undress me," she said.

Harry threw open the window by the bed. The air blew tartly in. It had stopped snowing, but the darkness seemed to hold flakes in every particle of air. Below him the moon-blind hollows in the mountains butted against the universal blackness.

"Don't go," she said.

"I'm not going."

He helped her with clumsy chivalry. She sat up and he lifted the stiff taffeta and whalebone over her head. Then, as she leaned forward with her head drooping to her knees, he tugged it free.

Harry was at the door when she called him back. He had his hand on the light switch.

"Don't be the one to leave me," she said. He turned out

the light and looked at her. She lay on her back. The moon made her ill-fitting skin lie quiet and smooth.

"I won't touch you," she said. "Please. Just for a few minutes . . . please . . . come here."

He went over to the bed and sat down near the edge. She took his hand.

"No, not for me," she said. "For you. It's not like you think. I asked *him*."

"I know."

"I asked him. You don't know. You needn't feel bad for me."

Now she let go of Harry.

"See?" she asked, looking at him for the first time. "You needn't feel bad. Now go back to the party downstairs. I'll be all right."

24

AT 4.45, woken by the whirl and thrum of the funicular, Harry got up and flung open the window. The dawn was the colour of bright electricity. The car clinked from the depot, buffeted by a pair of false starts, and Harry watched it churn through the heavy packs of snow trenched in the icy flank of the cliff; down the slash of the incline it inched its way, finally sucking itself into the tunnel vent, lipped with snow and puckered like a navel. Below was the darkness, from which cold blew. Up here, tipped with sun, was serenity.

Two hours later, after Harry had drifted back into a half-regretful sleep, the car emerged from the tunnel again. Harry waited on his bed for the inevitable click as its cogs locked, the silence when it cut off the power, and then got up.

A man shaped like a bottle in quilts of blue twill, wobbling under the weight of a pair of skis on thin shoulders, stepped on

to the platform of the ugly stone station below the Schnees-
fernerhaus. Off his shoulders hung a makeshift rucksack that
hunched his back and gave his walk a peculiar tilt. Whatever
else he carried, parcels, sticks, a rope, binoculars, also seemed
far too heavy for him. The man in blue was smoking a small
black cigar, puffing quickly, little gun-grey clouds im-
mediately dissipated in the strong wind.

Harry went down to breakfast. Creeley sat sipping a cup of
cream-topped coffee; Larry Porteous was talking animatedly
to him. Porteous signalled Harry.

"Is Grace down yet?" Harry asked.

Porteous ignored the question.

"You know Captain Creeley, don't you?"

The quilted suit collected itself in the chair and turned to
shake Harry's hand. The hand felt just as it had at Oberam-
mergau, small, fat, tight and warm.

"How are you, Captain?" Harry turned to Porteous
again. "Have you seen her this morning?"

"You know me. . . ." Creeley answered negligently.

"She isn't here, I guess. . . ."

"She's packed up," Porteous said dryly.

"When?"

"How should I know?"

"You went to look for her, after. . . ."

"I can answer that," Creeley said. "She took the first
train down. She was quite alone."

He was like a magician. He pulled an old crusty-leathered
skiing glove out of his suit. He slipped the glove on his
hand. The leather was dry and rotten.

"She left this little memento on the train."

Porteous adopted the joking tone.

"Harry here was much taken with her. . . ."

Creeley laughed.

"You went to see her this morning. . . ."

"Three cheers for democracy. . . ."

"Meaning what?" Creeley asked.

"He means that I took her upstairs last night," Harry answered. "She had drunk too much."

"Ah, you mustn't worry, Mister Carey. . . ." the captain broke in; the sound was a sort of wind escaping from his belly. "But I always forget that you have a little of the sentimentalist yet in you, a touch of the passionate traveller. You felt sorry for her."

Harry was about to object. Porteous leaned forward in his chair, his fingers tightening on his cup.

"How about this moral dignity of yours?" he said to Harry. "Where do you come in with that?"

Harry got up.

"Don't go," Creeley said. "Don't go, please. I'm sorry if I offended you. I made my little pilgrimage from the world below not dreaming of your dramas up here." He swallowed the last part of his sentence. "Well?" He shrugged his stuffed shoulders and spread his hands elaborately on the table. The cigarillo burned steadily between his fingers.

"OK, OK," said Harry. "Shall we change the subject?"

Grace had vanished, without complaint anyway, using her appearance of ridiculousness to understand herself better. Would Mieke have done the same? Yes, Mieke hated herself, but in a much more general way than Grace, or was the difference in the way he, Harry, had behaved with the two girls?

He listened to Creeley talking in the background of his thoughts: Creeley had a project. To climb a mountain and take philosophical viewpoint on three countries. The Alps of Switzerland, he chatted, imagine Nature always four thousand times higher than Man. Austria. Wiener Blut. But what's up North? A mighty nation brought low? Or are you a Beethoven man? A little greatness goes a long way?

"Order some breakfast and let's get going," Porteous suggested to Harry.

Nothing to say about the great North? No destiny? Creeley had his project. They were to get to the top and then

think. No good *shit* or *goddam* for the country? He had looked at it, he went on to say, five years. It was never the same twice. 1942, Harry thought, defeat in Africa.

When they got to the top they would know. Do you remember the oldies about climbing the Alps? The Führer was always up on top, smug as hell. Poetic destiny. The Germans have always mixed up poetry and politics. Did I tell you that? I used to get that feeling at the Kaserne.

"I remember," Harry said. "You said it was blood lust."

"Something awfully old, anyway. Come on, drink up your coffee."

25

THEY SET out in single file. Porteous had changed into climbing boots, soled with flower-like clusters of thin spikes. Harry had borrowed a pair of ordinary ski boots. The day was quite hot, now, at eleven, and they climbed in silence, saving their breath.

From the Schneefernerhaus to the Observation Point was a mere thousand metres of slope, seeming small from below, short, to be scampered over. Yet somehow they made little progress. When they had turned the shoulder and left the hotel behind, snow and rock were equidistant before and behind; after two hours of groping, slipping, being baffled by intermittent drifts, clinging to startlingly hot and razor-thin jags of flint, they seemed no further along than when they had started. Harry's breath came short; Porteous stopped for several cigarettes. Creeley gave them each a bar of bitter chocolate and laughed at them with intense seriousness.

He alone was undisturbed. His pace was regular; his short legs cambered on the slope, his body drawing itself up after them like an inch-worm. Often he was a hundred feet or more ahead of Harry and Porteous; then he would come scampering down the slope after them and pull them up.

They stopped for a lunch of hard-boiled eggs, the worst of the climb behind them.

"I'll say one thing," Harry put in, "I never thought you'd climb this bitch so easily. Not after watching you this morning. I thought you'd never make it from the station to the hotel."

"You used to teach this, didn't you?" Porteous asked.

"You've done a lot of things. . . ."

Harry had meant the remark to be exploratory. Creeley bristled and Porteous looked curiously at Harry.

Up to a point the captain gave the illusion of power so well; he had so much the upper hand. Then, as at the Kaserne, one word, a thought . . . an internal collapse took place. Creeley had subsided completely.

"Just a traveller," he said jerkily, laughing, "just moving. . . ."

Harry regretted having touched a sore spot, if that was what it was. At the same time he was more than a little disappointed that Creeley on the mountain, Creeley the man of Everest, Creeley the baiter, suave Creeley, natty Creeley, witty Creeley, urbane Creeley, that all Creeley should turn out to be was a blue twill puff of smoke.

"I didn't mean it that way," Harry said.

"No, I know. Perhaps we ought to catch a few minutes' sleep."

"You keep in shape, that's all," Porteous said, drawing on his cigarette. With his small hands he rubbed the spikes on his shoes.

"Well, the body goes first, you know." He was warming up again. He saw his opening. "Now Harry, a much bigger man. You let the weight fall all wrong. You drag backwards behind and you think you can just push your head and neck forward . . . you think they're going to get up there before you. You want to keep a plumb line through you. . . ."

Creeley was talking, brimming over with self-appraisals, intimate, confiding; Harry had not requested them, and the

situation didn't demand them. But they filled a void. Harry moved his jacket out into the sun and lay on it. He leaned back and felt the sun on his face.

Creeley had done everything he said; it was all in the details. But that very flow of details concealed the one thing he never mentioned: had he done all these things well, or even satisfactorily? Was the pattern one of failure? And if so, why?

Creeley drew out one of his cigarillos, wetted it and lit it. Then seeing that he was not expected to go on, he suddenly stopped. After the cigarillo had gone out, he flicked it away and went to sleep himself, his head crooked in his arms. Porteous dozed on his back as though he were surveying all the sky. Harry slept with his face on the warm dry rock, lying on his stomach.

They slept longer than they had intended, and when Creeley woke them up it was nearly four. The sun was lower, but nearly as strong. They climbed rapidly after their rest and within forty-five minutes they stood on the summit. The lodge on top was deserted. One party had just gone down in the cable car; they had seen it sway past on its wire, and below it the Schneesfernerhaus, looking small and distant. Creeley applied himself to the telescope. When he gave it up there was a black ring around his eye from pressing against the eye-piece.

Creeley started a small obscure conversation about what he had seen, what any of them could see. Harry was impatient.

"What eats you Carey?" Creeley asked.

"Sitting on top of a mountain and arguing about such stupid things. I don't care for all the mystery, that's all."

"What mystery?"

"Nothing. We must have slept too long. I'm sorry. It gets me down. . . ." It was more than that; the irritation surged through him, that he, a practical man—hadn't he always prided himself on being hard-headed—yes, a practical

man though given, as Creeley said, to moments of sentiment, even passion, that this practical man could be so unsettled by an atmosphere, and, at that, an atmosphere deliberately created by Creeley. The captain returned, again and again, to the same theme: what was the country around them, and, more personally, what were they, intruders, doing there? Yet Harry could not be altogether irritated; the captain alone seemed to understand the country, or even to see it, and that was better than shutting one's eyes to it.

"If I'm being stupid," Creeley said moodily, "it's your business to be intelligent. Why can't you think about it?"

"I told you, it's not important."

"Not important? Come over here. . . ." He pulled Harry over to the telescope. "Look. You're looking North. And that's not important? What you're looking at through those young ignorant eyes of yours, what you can't see at the Kaserne and you think I'm a phoney to bother about seeing, or remembering . . . what you can't see now and what you think I'm stupid to talk about . . . what you won't see until you learn something . . . not about yourself, but about *that* . . . that's a metaphor for something, not you and I. . . ."

He let Harry go. Porteous looked on, playing with the ring on his finger. Harry stared at it, fascinated.

"I'm sorry," Harry said. "I don't understand anything. It's all wound up in some paradox about power. You want me to say something, and I don't know what it is, nor why you want me to say it."

Porteous was staring out of the window now.

"It's getting on, you know. Do you think the car's coming up again?"

"They said it would," Creeley answered.

"I wouldn't want to go down in the dark."

The captain looked impatiently at Porteous.

It was about then that Harry began to feel sure that the train wasn't coming, wasn't meant to be coming.

"Let's start down now," Harry said, with no idea why the captain should be lying.

Creeley chuckled softly, as though to himself.

"It'll be up at six. It always makes a trip for the sunset. It's quite a sight."

"It didn't make one yesterday. . . ."

"It was raining. . . ."

Creeley's continued lying panicked Harry. Porteous seemed to be reacting the same way.

"You can stay if you want, but I'm going down."

"Don't be a fool, you don't know your way down."

Porteous and Harry drew together by the window. The cable car sat patiently at the end of its rope, just inside the depot roof. The mouth of the shed was dark against the snow.

"It'll go down," Creeley said.

"Are you coming Larry?" Harry asked.

Porteous looked at the captain. Creeley smiled back at them, as much as to say that he didn't care. Just as negligently he added:

"We'll all go down, together."

The descent was no faster than the climb, and with grains and patches of darkness below, and pockets of giant shadows on the slopes, the valley floor seemed to recede. Their destination dwindled. In the mystery and tension of their sudden blind tumblings, accelerations, Harry grew afraid of all the unanswered questions. He looked back at the captain, or ahead when Creeley led the way. His blue twill was turning to black; Porteous' light gold hair caught last yellows of the sun. Why had they ever met there?

It was nearly a quarter to six when the cable car dislodged itself from its shed and swayed gently upward, passing almost directly over their heads. The sun caught the flat metal bottom of the car and the belly-like billowing on either side. Passengers waved to them and long after the car had passed them it glinted angrily like a bee fighting for the queen.

The captain said nothing, but they managed another, last,

quarrel when they reached the hotel. Harry had gone up to soak in a bath, sore from the climb. Porteous was in the bar with Creeley. When Harry emerged from his room, changed and clean, he noticed that the hotel seemed particularly empty. They've all gone to admire the sunset, Harry said to himself. Then he noticed that it was pitch-black outside. Then he went to the desk and asked about the trains down to Garmisch.

"The last one just left," the clerk said.

Harry walked over to the bar.

"Did you know the train had gone?"

Porteous wanted to know what Harry would have. Creeley barely turned around.

"It left ten minutes ago," Porteous said.

"And there's not another."

"That was the last one," Creeley said.

"Our passes are up at midnight. . . ."

Creeley laughed.

"Is that what has you excited? Don't worry about that. I'll fix that for you. I'll say you were hot on the trail of Martin Bormann."

"Some joke. . . ."

"OK, OK," Porteous broke in. "He said he'd fix it. Cool off."

"What'll you have?" Creeley asked.

"I don't drink," Harry answered.

"Sure you do."

"I don't want to drink."

What the hell was eating him? Where were last night's revellers? Sergeant Belt? Miss Gadegaard? Mister Johnson? Scattered back to a hundred destinations . . . out there. He went over to the bank of windows as though to find them. the hotel lights extended a few feet. Out there was a nap of bright snow; many footprints diminished into the void.

Harry had supper sent up to his room. He read, and at about ten switched off his light, cold and aching. A few

minutes later he heard the captain and Porteous marching down the corridor towards his room, talking boisterously, laughing loudly, in a tone Harry had never heard either of them use before. They stopped in front of his door, hesitated, and then walked on to their own rooms, a few doors down on the same floor.

Lying on his bed, lights out, but with his room whitened by moon and snow, Harry listened to their anxious laughter, far into the night.

26

HARRY HEARD the same laughter again, but not until the middle of June, and in between he had laughed not a little like that himself. Mieke had plagued him, but only within himself. He refused her calls, sent back her letters, tricked, lied, and then, annoyed at his cowardice, had relented and seen her once or twice. There was no reason to avoid her, Harry rationalised: he was not in love. But she made it seem as though that were not the question, because she never asked for anything, even to see him. She sent word of what was important to her, asked about him, invited him to Amalie's birthday party, her eighteenth, and was never insulted with his refusals. This Harry took for pride, and angered, sent her some money in an envelope, without a note.

In Stuttgart, Harry made the acquaintance of Lieutenant Amaury de la Grange, expert in liaison, walking a fluffy poodle for his mistress. They got to drinking, and to be friends, in a way. They talked in insults and made the rounds of the black market dives: the *Blue Angel* where the girls wore phosphorescent catherine wheels on their breasts and belly, the *Club Pfau*, where the rowdies, quiet and serious, bought, sold, and exchanged. Harry caught a glimpse of Mieke's friend Helmut there, but went unrecognised. Harry was

merging into the country now, acquiring a Baden accent, a cigarette stoop, very long hair. De la Grange wore gloves and never dirtied his hands while Harry cared less and less about such trifles.

After a few weeks of friendship de la Grange introduced Harry to his mistress, Baroness von D. She was a tall, impertinent blonde. She had just given away her poodles and bought a Russian wolfhound who needed a pound and a half of red meat every day. Harry, Amaury and she would drive through Stuttgart with the dog on the hood of their jeep. The animal loved the cold, as his mistress loved warmth. She, Harry and Amaury had good laughs together; the Baroness loved her fun.

She opened the gates of Society to Harry and de la Grange. The two of them went on Sundays to chilly castles in utter disrepair, to two-room flats in Munich; they were offered baronial silverware, Dresden china, family portraits, Noh masks, a Modigliani that had belonged to Hermann Goering; they were importuned with dull tales, besieged with demands and requests: food, coal, luxuries, clothing, character testimonials. Society was in court, the Spruchkammer; Class One was segregated from Class Two and Class Three. Suddenly everyone had a Jewish cousin; the Resistance assumed fantastic proportions. Harry and de la Grange had their good laughs about that too.

It was a good, ordered life. He had never met so many people, or so many people with something to sell. Then de la Grange got mixed up in a slight difficulty over one hundred stolen passports, lost his mistress, with her his income, with his income his entrée, with his entrée his good, ordered life, and Harry lost sight of him completely. So it was no longer the same. Amaury had had the gift of liking pleasure, looking for it, and knowing where it was to be found. Alone, Harry could find little, and not finding pleasure, he soon found boredom.

Having met her by accident near the Opera, Harry on an

impulse invited Mieke back to CIC Headquarters in Esslingen. They slept by the glowing red button of the teletype and Harry had to push her out at six. They laughed at the strange circumstances of their love, Mieke making the gentle jokes, and Harry laughing, and Harry didn't let her know when the orders finally arrived transferring him permanently to Sub-Region Karlsruhe.

In fact, there was so much laughter in those two months that when the orders assigning him to Karlsruhe arrived, Harry was quite unprepared to take up where he had left off. His guard was down: recovering from Creeley, Porteous, by degrees from Mieke, his point-of-view had relaxed. The moment he read his orders, that whole good orderly life—it was little more than the life he had led before coming to Germany—vanished, as though sealed into the envelope with the orders. The nagging questions returned and an odd coincidence, a desire to see Mieke once more before leaving. The suit donned in the morning, the three silk ties given him by the baroness, the shoes made by Ritter in Esslingen, the shirts by Frau Bachmeister's sister (reduced, poor woman, through too political a past): these ceased to be the insignia of the carefree civilian and became once again the mark of the German. The shoes were too good, and had to be packed away; the ties as well, and the shirts had to be worn dirty. With the dirt, the meanness, Harry reassumed the unsewn, seamy character of the German, morselled out, partitioned, divided within and without, and what laughter there was, was of quite another sort. He did see Mieke, because she fitted his new mood, but he did not dare say goodbye to the Baroness or Amaury. They would have laughed in the old way.

THE LITTLE *Brüderschaft*, as Gargallo described it, was at breakfast in Karlsruhe. The table was rectangular and covered with a red cloth. Eight places were set with blue plates and tall blue glasses of ice water. Eight chairs with high plush backs stood around the table. The dining room itself was pure Scrap Iron Fustian, again Gargallo's *mot*, in reference to the magnate, Friedrich Kaiser, the former owner. Like too many German rooms, it seemed to contain a long, orderly family history, embodied at its highest point in the décor, and at its lowest point in the small details of decay ever-present in the stuffy furniture: buttons missing from sofas, a knob here from the elaborate back of a chair, a trifling inch from the gold fringe of the drapes—eaten away, while the formality always suggested former glory.

They had come down one by one, Porter, who never slept, or said he never slept, first, at eight. At half past, Gargallo, Vovnic, Harry and Blaustein, and just before nine, when the cook stopped serving, Wainhouse and Litz. At half past nine the CO, Captain Carlin, who got his eggs anyway.

The yolks grown cold, the coffee turning ashen, breakfast still dragged on at ten. Business might interfere occasionally, but generally Crime dawdled over its own morning coffee.

The Greek was a topic of conversation. He was crime for the week, and it was true, wherever he turned up, something smelled. But Thanatopolous was a minor operator in a fast league. Penicillin, junk, rubber, coffee—Gargallo would stab a pencil at the table cloth—small stuff. Then he gets out of hand, or we think he does, Gargallo went on, raising a bleary eye and sliding his huge bald head from side to side. . . .

"The CID finds a head." All this needed explaining to Harry, who was new in the area. "Just a head. A German policeman called Speyer who, several months before the CID found his head, had been guarding empty freight cars on the Pforzheim spur. Then Bingo! He vanishes. His head

turns up, but not his body. The Greek as far as we know is in Bamberg, but it smells of him. Badly done. Probably not his handiwork, just his planning."

"I'd like to use the Greek," Porter butted in. "He represents all the evil that's inherent here. . . ."

Blaustein sipped his cold coffee.

"What's inherent here, Mister Writer?"

"Evil," Porter said patiently.

"Inherent is it?" Gargallo slipped a piece of toast into his mouth and subsided. Porter waited for more.

"I'll tell you what the word means, if you tell me what gives with Magda. . . ." Weinstein was the last word in imported breeziness.

"Magda was Hitler's mistress." Blaustein rubbed his eyelid patiently. He was considerably older than the rest of them, and he had absolutely no sense of humour.

"So was Mrs. Tisch," Porter put in.

"It's like dropping names. Everybody was. They all claimed the honour. I don't blame the poor paperhanger for doing himself in."

"Mrs. Tisch can show you a photograph."

"She can?" Gargallo asked.

"On a balcony with him."

"A balcony's not a bed."

"So early in the morning," Vovnic interrupted. "Bright kiddies, sex again." He turned to Harry. "Magda belongs to the Greek."

"We all do. . . ." Porter said.

"You just do tell him that, Porter," Wainhouse said.

Frau Tisch. The name recurred over and over again in their conversation. Harry asked about her.

"Larry Porteous will tell you about her," Gargallo said.

"That's where you're going isn't it? Pforzheim?"

"She's a devoted American," Wainhouse said. Gargallo looked at Wainhouse patronisingly.

"How was Oberammergau?" he asked Harry.

"Restful."

"What's their line now?" Blaustein asked. "Do we love these Krauts or don't we?"

"Lucius says yes. . . ." Porter interrupted.

"That's right," Harry said. "We love them."

The *Brüderschaft* started up from table, and Gargallo half-heartedly pulled at the brocade curtains and let in some Karlsruhe daylight. Blaustein yawned and Gargallo repeated dryly from the window: "We love them".

It was a week later that Harry was transferred to Pforzheim, at the request as he understood, of Larry Porteous.

28

THE NOON time Harry drove over the hill from the Autobahn into Pforzheim where what was dead of the city extended below him like a saucer of grey flat water, that day, from the dull Fourth-of-July flag to the kept-in-after-school Kraut in his blue guard uniform leaning on MG's front door, a carbine on his shoulder by a leather thong, the town was still. Pforzheim Military Government wasn't operating. Major Fingar and Captain Tupper had taken the day off; they were at play.

Porteous had said: "You get used to it," meaning the smell, and Harry took him up on it when he reached the CIC house. "I suppose that it gets in your clothes and your food and your hair and you smell like that yourself," he said. Porteous shrugged his shoulders. It won't smell as bad in winter.

But now it was summer. Of the forty thousand and some dead, at least ten thousand were not buried, which gave Harry, as it had many others, the feeling that Pforzheim was very much alive. The rubble was fermenting. Noxious weeds sprang out of crevices, bright green. There was so much heat that the piles of bricks seemed in motion; they crawled into intricate shapes, streets sheared back, walls dangling . . . the

materials were all materials of death, ruin, dried mortar, flaked metal, white and bright wooden crosses. This was two years, four months, and eleven days afterwards.

People in multiples are not half so pathetic as sentiment, small things lost, possessions looted, a clock pendulum or half a bedstead. In Pforzheim the portable had been stripped bare; only the people remained, the people, alive. Pforzheim had smelled of people and not clocks or crockery, burdening everyone off the Autobahn or into the steep town.

Following the steep road down into the town, Harry tried what Porteous had said: "Don't breathe in." He also understood Gargallo's gesture an hour earlier, two fingers to his nose. Like Porteous, he would wait for winter. He followed the CIC arrows, turning right, then straight ahead, in second up a sudden hill. Where the valley left off was an abrupt primness and solidity: the rich were reduced, a few of them . . . in some houses a stray had struck, a hole existed where their rooms, bereft of furniture, showed their sparse interiors . . . but they could live at least in their ornate facades and their formal gardens, intact and flourishing as all Pforzheim flourished. The rich were reduced; their neighbours were no longer theirs to select. They lived in proud single or double rooms in their own houses; the rest bulged with restless families of children, amateur veterans, the old. The rich were reduced; the rest seemed to have vanished.

The CIC house was indistinguishable from the others. Up here, where the bric-a-brac of the household bloomed, a silence from the people, while below, not a house stood, but three ghostly spires of the three churches, and these were alive, at least in one sense, with people. Though below Harry, in a sort of side valley that led into the main valley, away from the destruction, two white-skirted girls volleyed at the net of a red clay court, where Harry himself stood, it was silent. Harry waited a few seconds before taking his jeep up the driveway. The city was partly shut off from view to his left: the wind blew in a last bittersweet plunge. Then he drove in.

THE DINING room was set for tea. On the table were little American flags stuck in wooden blocks. Five places were laid, and next to four of them were thin, oblong packages wrapped in beet-coloured tissue paper.

"I see we're expecting Frau Tisch," Waxman said, coming down from the spacious upstairs, clean, washed, freshly changed. He shook hands with Harry. They had been at Esslingen together just before Harry left for Oberammergau. He was a couple of years younger than Harry, as heavy, but more bristling and energetic. Harry had liked him immediately for his lively humour and lack of pretence.

Porteous was standing with his slight hands on the back of a chair at the head of the table. He said nothing. Because it was Porteous who had asked for Harry, because it meant for Harry at last getting out into the field, after seven months of delay, Harry felt he owed Porteous something.

"What time is she coming?" Waxman asked.

"Who?" Porteous asked back.

"Frau Tisch?"

Waxman started unwrapping the package by his cup and saucer.

Porteous said very politely:

"We decided not to open those until she came."

Porteous' face was narrow, sallow and tired; Waxman's round, with a heavy beard. At that moment he was smiling broadly.

"That's OK, I've got about half a dozen of those watches by now. . . ."

Waxman noticed Harry looking at the package by his place.

"It's a watch," he said. "She makes them."

"Who is she?"

Halliday, the fourth agent, came in. He was wearing a neatly pressed uniform. He was almost as neat as Porteous,

but his neatness was, if anything, even more vain than Porteous'. What made it more innocent was that it was so plain. The sophistication Halliday assumed was only too clearly skin-deep. Porteous' had penetrated further, but still left him only half-cultivated. Porteous was, like Harry, in civvies. Halliday shook Harry's hand.

"Was that the MG Office I saw as I came in?" Harry asked.

"You'll find the major's a s.o.b." Halliday said.

"That's when you find the major," Waxman added.

Porteous' crooked nervous smile was beginning to bother Harry. Apparently he couldn't stop playing with the back of his chair. Porteous said something in German to the cook.

"We eat," Waxman said.

Harry sat down.

"Essen! Essen!"

Tomato sandwiches on thin white bread, and fresh strawberries Mrs. Tisch had sent over from her garden in Wildbad in the French Zone. They were in two baskets in the middle of the table. Waxman continued to unwrap the paper from his package.

"Cheap watch," Waxman said. "I could do better on the Autobahn." He passed the watch to Halliday and the sandwiches to Harry. Harry took two and passed them on to Porteous. There was a silence. The cook came in with the tea already poured out in cups.

"Maybe she's run out of gas," Halliday suggested. Porteous looked down at his hands.

That, it was soon explained, was how they had met Mrs. Tisch. She had stopped at CIC Headquarters in her black Opel short on gas, and asked for some. She claimed that she had to go to Frankfort on important business and gave Halliday, who was on duty, the name of the colonel she was supposed to see. Halliday refused the gas, but let her call the colonel, and when she got the colonel, she handed the phone back to Halliday. The colonel said who was this, and would he please, please the first time, give Mrs. Tisch the gasoline, since she

was on government business. Halliday gave her the gas, and she gushed with pleasure.

"The colonel sounded relieved. . . ." Waxman put in.

"Government business." Halliday snorted.

"You had no reason to be rude to her," Porteous said.

"I wasn't rude. I couldn't stand the woman. She was in furs up to her neck. She was so goddam sure I'd give her that gas."

"You did, didn't you?" Waxman asked.

"Cut it out, you two," Porteous said. "Here she comes."

. . .

"On government business?" Halliday asked crudely.

"With two dachshunds."

Waxman was by the window, watching her come up through the rock garden.

"So long," he said to Porteous. Halliday followed him out. Harry stayed. Loyalty.

Harry compared the living Tisch with the dossier at Headquarters, Karlsruhe: "TISCH, KATHIERINE. Subject claims to be US citizen, married to Harry TISCH, Toledo, Ohio, candy manufacturer. Returned to Germany Oct. 16, 1938. No record of entry. US Passport destroyed in war. Twice volunteered to assist CIC. Offers refused per authority 970 CIC." The dossier didn't convey the ordinary, the day-to-day Mrs. Tisch, the slightly elaborate charm, the occasional right note and the occasional wrong note, or the vast in-between. A dossier rarely did give the complete picture: a subject is not easily measured by his mistakes.

She came into the dining room smartly, well-dressed, wearing a black *tailleur* with neat black and white checks, a woman of about fifty, with blonde hair cloche shaped except for tight little ringlets against her neck.

"But you boys haven't opened your presents," she said, as Waxman and Halliday passed her in the door.

"Isn't that sweet? Who thought of the flags?" No one answered her question, which was not a question but a sort

of puff of elementary joy, just that, a puff. She was a series of little puffs of conversation, forcing them to feel at home with her and worse, herself quite at home.

A smell of the dead city curled heavily in through the window, diffused with the fragrance of the flowers in the garden. Mrs. Tisch sat down while Harry opened his present on the sofa beside her. While he was unwrapping it, she put her hand on his leg. He looked at her fingers and the rings on them; methodically he undid the tissue paper. But he was too slow; she took the package away from him and took the paper off in one sweep. Everything she did was very easy.

After a while Harry realised that she was not merely at home; she was familiar, sensually familiar. She impregnated any conversation, any movement, with a physical and rather obvious awareness of her audience. She was never merely herself; she was herself for others. He felt awkward, therefore, at being in the same room with her and Porteous, and worse, with Waxman and Halliday laughing behind the sliding door. Porteous too was nervous. Mrs. Tisch talked and Porteous failed to devote the proper attention; several times she was forced to repeat a sentence, which she did, of course, with new enthusiasm. But Harry could see that she didn't like it.

After a while, to be the more effectively rude, the other two returned, Halliday with a cognac bottle, helping himself and Waxman to a glass while ignoring Harry, Porteous and Mrs. Tisch. Mrs. Tisch had her back turned to Harry, but Porteous kept on looking over her shoulder at Harry. As soon as he could get a word in, Harry thanked Mrs. Tisch for the watch, and strapped it hurriedly on his wrist. Because Waxman was watching him, Harry felt that this was his first capitulation to Mrs. Tisch. She wrested this concession, however, as easily as everything else. In fact she didn't notice it at all, and Porteous had to point out Harry's thank you to her . . . at which she smiled to Harry with her tight chic mouth and turned back to Porteous.

Harry was nicely caught in a civilised cross-fire. Halliday and Waxman polished off a new plate of sandwiches; Mrs. Tisch kept Porteous under a nervous spell. Harry got up and went upstairs to unpack, but the maid had already done the work for him, hung up his other civilian suit, his officer's pinks. There was nothing to do up there. The air in his room was close; ugly purple clouds the colour of a bruise swelled up in the distance; the sky was turning brutish. He hurried back down. Porteous and Mrs. Tisch were still talking, but Porteous must have said something to Halliday and Waxman, because they now sat decorously on little chairs facing Mrs. Tisch and Larry. The bottle had gone. Perhaps only the exaggerated interest with which they listened indicated some slight measure of contempt.

"Not during the bombing itself. . . ." Mrs. Tisch was saying in reply to a polite question from Halliday. "I was in Wildbad. But I could see the fire from my house thirty kilometres away. Friends in Baden say they saw it, over the mountains. We couldn't drive in the next day because the Heimwehr had the road blocked. Young boys and old men were patrolling the roads with cardboard rifles. So I came in on Friday and we were allowed in . . . the people who came from the villages around to see, and they kept them out with wooden barricades at the top of the Bretten road where you come in now . . . and people were looting . . . everyone went around asking for news; almost any news meant that someone you knew was killed. They started posting lists, and the people would press around them six deep and yet they weren't related . . . because that was the good thing. They didn't wipe out too many halves of families. Just everything."

She fondled one of the dachshund's ears.

"His mother was so frightened," Mrs. Tisch baby-talked, "Wasn't she? Whimpering all the time, and she wouldn't walk because the earth was still hot after the fire, and her paws hurt."

Harry couldn't stand being in the room with her any more.

Her baby-talk filled the room until there was no air to breathe. His little paw-paw hurty-wurty, ooh the poo little paw-paw. Harry walked down to the bottom of the garden, but even there he couldn't escape her. Because of the closeness of the air Porteous opened one of the living room windows and her voice wafted through the still air like a sweet coating on the sweetness.

Later on, after he had taken a walk and come back, he was met in the garden by Mrs. Tisch, Waxman and Halliday behind her. Porteous had a camera under his arm. The cook followed behind, dangling a light-meter on the end of a strap.

The evening was rotting: a thundercloud had gathered the sun-topped hills inwards and was sucking the smell up from the city. In spirals, ash a light wind caught up was plucked upwards into a deep damaged grey-black sky; the sky itself was very still, dark like an inverted pond.

Halliday was photographed with his arm around Mrs. Tisch.

Then the cook took one of all five of them sitting in the rock garden. Waxman let Porteous put his arm over his shoulder. Then Porteous took it off, put his hands in his pockets, and was taken alone with Mrs. Tisch.

Waxman, was chaffing Porteous about the watch he had received, bigger than theirs, and gold.

"Don't be silly, boys," Mrs. Tisch said. "I can't give the commander the same things I give you. . . ." She laughed, a little caught short. Halliday insisted on seeing the watch and admiring it; Porteous had to take it off and show it around.

"I've got to go," Mrs. Tisch said. "I'd like to get back before this storm breaks."

Porteous looked up at the sky for the first time, and Harry looked down on Pforzheim. Against the purple where the sky was turning black in a deep welt, the houseless walls were milk white and yellow. Where the girls had stopped volleying below, the grounds-keeper was a lonely figure with a stiff

broom sweeping the clay and letting down the nets before the downpour.

"The rain will wreck that," Mrs. Tisch said. She gathered the two dachshunds in against her skirt.

"You take Mrs. Tisch back into the centre of the town, will you?" Porteous asked Harry.

"But I know my way," she protested.

"That's all right," Harry said. "You can show me the way. . . ."

"Goodbye boys," she waved. Waxman and Halliday waved back to her, and went on into the house. Porteous followed them without looking back.

Her black Opel was already turning over, and behind the house the cook was emptying out some crusts soaked in water. Harry got into his jeep and backed it down the driveway.

He followed the CIC signs back down, thinking about their precious secrecy. Not even MG had that many arrows. True, MG was not as hard to find. The hill was so steep Harry had the impression they were falling. It had not been like that coming up from the ruins. They drove down and down together; she was always on the point of ramming into him, and at the bottom of the hill, where a bridge over the Nagold had once stood, and one had to make a detour and go over a row of planks laid on the dry river bed, she passed him. Harry had thought that by taking her down he might rid himself of her. Perhaps Pforzheim was a kind of maze in which she could never find her way back. But she had taken him down, and now, from where the detour was, he himself didn't know which way to go. The air was heavy and still; none of the day's heat had lifted.

She waved goodbye out of her window. Harry waved goodbye.

Now he had to find his own way back.

IT TOOK the long ride up the hill to recall to Harry what so irritated him about Katherine Tisch: that she was happy, or gave that impression. In the year of the lumpy skirt, split shoes, seedy undergarments, her chic was insulting. Not only insulting, but Harry thought she ought to have had the sense to conceal it a little. How did she manage to flourish so? It could not be honestly. That was it, her assault on life was outrageous in a way . . . then, having come to this conclusion, Harry could only laugh at his Puritanism. For all he knew, the luxury was only skin-deep. Wasn't it rather like Larry's? It wasn't only the year of the lumpy skirt; it was also the year of the artificial fortune. Not excepting Mrs. Tisch, they were all on moving ground. That rationalisation in turn amused Harry: identifying himself with the country and with events was one of many ways he had learned that could discount an essential sympathy with Mrs. Tisch's prosperity. Why should luxury be a term of opprobrium? Had he objected to Amaury's Baroness and her wolf-hound? No, those had been the good, well-ordered days. They were what he wanted, and that was why he resented poverty, destruction, and self-pity. Waxman and Halliday had behaved very badly; he intended to make it up to Porteous.

But when he arrived back at the house, Larry Porteous greeted him at the door, which he was just bolting, with a caustic remark to the effect that "your friends have gone", and Harry was surfeited with local argument, too tired to resent Porteous' insinuation.

The storm still hovered over Pforzheim. A wind had come up from the south; dust, red as brick, hung between valley and hills.

"You'd better shut all the windows upstairs," Porteous said, so Harry went upstairs and did the job. When he came back down, he was surprised to find Major Fingar in Mrs. Tisch's place on the sofa. Porteous introduced them. The

Major seemed weighted down by a huge, unwieldy head, extravagantly broad on top and thin at his chin; he carried his head thrust weakly forward so that his chin plumped softly on his neck. He and Porteous had obviously been talking about Speyer. What were they doing about it? The major asked, including Harry in their conversation.

"I can't say we're doing much," Porteous answered. Fingar smiled, ready to accuse them of taking the matter rather lightly.

"Do you plan to leave it there in the woods?" he asked, referring to the head.

"We've taken it in," Porteous replied, rather amused. The major didn't see the joke.

"Oh, you have. . . ." Fingar seemed mollified. "As long as you're doing something about it. I wish you people would send in reports on these things. . . ."

"We sent you a report," Porteous said.

"You did not," Fingar retorted with a categorical jerk of his head, "and I damn well wish you would."

"What would you do with it?" Porteous' tiny hands were playing with the watch which he had taken off his wrist.

"It's no skin off my nose," Fingar answered. "I guess it's your job." Harry watched the major backing off. As Waxman had said when they had discussed the murder a few hours earlier, Speyer wasn't any part of Fingar's occupation duties, and the major *occupied*, in the fullest sense of the word, and that was all. "I still think you ought to do something about it. . . ." Fingar finished during a long silence in which Porteous got up to close the windows behind them.

"Are you staying for dinner?" Porteous asked.

"No thanks, Larry," Fingar said, looking at his watch, twice the size of Porteous'. He lifted his head carefully off his neck and stood up. "Glad to have met you," he said, offering a plump hand to Harry. Harry nodded, and Porteous escorted the major to the door, locking it after him.

"So Waxman and Halliday have gone," Porteous said

when he came back into the living room. He put one leg up on the windowsill and looked out at the storm. His elbow was propped on his knee and he was sucking his thin knuckles.

"Why don't you go into Karlsruhe?" he asked.

"I've just come out," Harry answered without thinking.

"You can play chess with Gargallo. He's a great chess player."

"How'd you know I played chess?"

"Creeley told me. He said you played pretty well."

Harry tried to guess what Porteous wanted. He wasn't the sort of man to treat the men under his command to a pretext.

"OK, if you want me to. . . ." Harry said.

"Go talk to George. George Hartman. He works for me. Ask him about China. He was twenty years in Shanghai."

"OK."

"I was twenty years in Philly. Funny, isn't it?"

The thunder had begun again. It had a thin, tinny sound.

"See you later," Harry said.

"Better take a raincoat. . . ."

As soon as Harry got to Hartman's house, he saw that he could trust George. He wasted no time before asking him about Porteous.

"What about him? You know what I want, damn it, what about Larry?"

"He's all right," George said, puffing on a huge pipe.

"My God, are you wrapped up with him too?"

"With Larry? No, I don't think so. . . ."

Hartman answered all Harry's questions like that, elliptically. He was calm and never asked a question himself.

They were talking in the smaller of the two rooms that Porteous had found for Hartman near the water tower on top of the Turmberg. The room smelled of tobacco and stale bedclothes, and George himself sat on the bed while in the next room his wife prepared the bottle for their baby. They talked in circles. Perhaps it was Hartman's twenty years in Shanghai.

"What's going to happen to this country?" Harry asked at one point.

"I don't know. I expect you'll come back to find out."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well . . . why else would you ask?"

So it went. A good German, as Waxman had described before, presumably didn't care much, or was it that he didn't know much? He had been educated and, forty years old, he had held responsibility at one time or another . . . he had done much. Yet he had returned to Germany after the war, and now he worked for CIC Pforzheim, receiving nothing but a little food and enough tobacco to keep his pipe burning.

But Porteous had said it, and Harry had heard it a hundred times: show me the "good" German. But usually it was some image in the speaker's mind. The good German would have avoided the pitfalls of the "bad" German; he would have foreseen disasters that few foresaw. He would have rebellion and will power, humility and precision. George seemed to accept, to wait, to look . . . again Harry thought it might be the Shanghai in him. Further it would seem that the "good" German would understand "guilt" and "defeat", but George seemed impatient with these words; he never used them except for himself.

He was only explicit on one thing: he did not like Mrs. Tisch. He didn't trust her. What was he working on now? Harry asked. He was looking into that man Speyer, who got himself murdered. Had he found out anything? Yes, he had found out a great deal. Speyer was poor. He had lived with his sister in Bretten until six months before his death; then he had found a room in Pforzheim which he shared with an unemployed tailor from the Eastern Zone. He was poor and utterly without ambition. What does that mean? Harry asked. Just that he was a man, like everyone else, George answered.

Every time, a visit to George was a supply of good sense, a perspective in human nature. He was the only man Harry could find who made Germany unimportant.

It was George who pointed out the next day when the daily routine of CIC life began for Harry that when you were interviewing a return POW you were also seeing a real human being. When Harry was a student, a visiting parent had explained that her dog was only afraid of three categories: salesmen, little children, and students. But the dog was not at all afraid of human beings. One by one the repatriates would troop in to relate their stale histories to the CIC. Usually their pity for themselves far outweighed the horror of their lives . . . at least in the mind of the interviewing agent. How to distinguish a single horror from so many? What was the distinction between one mutilated foot and another? They sat, bone-shaven heads awkwardly erect out of ten-year-old business suits.

Who wanted them back? Their wives had given them up for dead, had not re-married, but only from fear of the Civil Code; their children were ashamed of these spectre-like visitations, ashamed and afraid; their friends had been killed, were dispersed; their jobs had long been given away; their houses were destroyed, and all their links to the past . . . in ten years their parents had died or been killed; and what was unkindest was that only hope had kept them alive, and captivity had been, they now discovered, the best illusion of them all.

Some would become KPD members, bitter, vengeful, avaricious of time and happiness; others turned to religion. But their self-pity, justified or not, was wasted on a country with an excess of the commodity.

George would do the questioning. Where had they been? Magnitogorsk? Ublimaya Twelve? They did not know. It was square, cold, and they worked in a vast, endless forest. They had had very little to eat . . . George would interrupt them: how many had they left behind? They did not know: they had been moved so many times, the country was so vast, many many . . . if they didn't work to their quota they received no food, without food they could not work . . . George would interrupt them patiently: had many of them

become Communists? They did not know. Occasionally someone would disappear from the camp, but whether it was to the training school in Leningrad, or merely another "disappearance" . . . some had come back and got better treatment. George would interrupt them.

The universal nightmare. When one would go and another come in, George and Harry would exchange looks. Occasionally they would laugh, together: that would be some particularly unadapted prisoner, the man who should never have gone to war, the miraculous exception to survival of the fittest. But losing a war was not like losing a battle: in battle there is gallantry, if you believe in it, mechanisms of human disobedience, denying the obvious in defeat; in ultimate defeat there is nothing, nothing, perhaps, except time, time in which to examine causes, time to see and explain errors, time to sit, time to sleep, time to discharge responsibility, rebuild blindness, time to erect folly.

31

"WHERE'S LARRY?" Fingar asked when a few days later Harry arrived at the MG Office. "I thought he'd be over. . . ."

"He sent me. . . ."

"You speak French?"

"Tolerably. . . ."

"What's the matter with Porteous? Doesn't he want to help?"

"I don't know Major . . . he just told me to come."

"Funny. What's the matter with Porteous?"

The last time it was not a question any more. Fingar was talking to himself and leading the way into his inner office.

Fingar introduced Harry to the two colonels seated in his office. "Colonel Schwartz . . . Mister Carey. Colonel Rabeau . . . Mister Carey." Harry shook hands with them.

"Here's your letter," Colonel Schwartz said, extending an official manila envelope to Harry. He peered at the address on the front. "What the hell is this CIC anyway? So goddam many initials now you can't tell first base from second. . . ." He didn't wait for Harry's answer.

"Nice town you have, Major," Rabeau interrupted. He seemed to have been talking with Fingar before Harry's arrival and be continuing after an unpleasant interruption. "Used to have a little town like this myself a couple of years ago. Called Ullheim. Ever hear of it?"

"Near Bad Nauheim?" Fingar shook his head doubtfully.

"It's on the Rhine, Major. Didn't think you would have. Crummy little place, but at least it wasn't mashed up like this. A real shame." He drawled the "real" and shook his jowls in sorrow.

Colonel Schwartz was bald and near-sighted. He held the envelope up to his nose and looked at the address again.

"CIC eh? Let me guess . . . Communications. . . ."

Fingar moved to help the colonel.

"It stands for. . . ."

Schwartz waved him away.

"There are some people who always interrupt things, give away the endings to detective stories. . . ." The colonel went into a longish story about a staff assistant he had had during the war. He chuckled at some private reminiscence and Fingar laughed heartily. Harry started at the major; he had not yet seen him laugh.

"Give him the letter, Bill," Rabeau said.

"Sure . . . where are you son?" the colonel looked away from Fingar.

"Real nice town, yes sir. . . ."

Harry opened the envelope and read the letter. The addressee was requested to offer his services as interpreter to Colonels Schwartz and Rabeau. The two officers were, according to the letter, making a three-day tour of recreation facilities in the French Zone.

"I'm supposed to act as your interpreter," Harry told the colonels.

"That's fine," Rabeau answered. "I was wondering what we'd do when we ran into those Frenchies. Got it bad enough learning to say *schnell* to these people." He pointed vaguely out of the window at Pforzheim.

"I tell you Major," Schwartz said to Finger, patting his bald head with a handkerchief, "I don't know *why* we were asked to make this trip. . . ."

"Some people take me for French with my name . . . Rabeau, that's a French name." He paused, conscious of Colonel Schwartz pulling at his Eisenhower jacket.

"What is it, Bill?"

"The Major here thinks we ought to start our trip in Wildbad. . . ."

Rabeau guffawed.

"We heard that was nice, Major. We heard." Both colonels seemed to agree that, for a major, Finger had his heart in the right place. They were going to test Harry's.

"Well, what do you think of Wildbad, son? Is that a nice place?"

Harry took the major's cue.

"I hear, Colonel."

Rabeau guffawed again. The major was laughing twice as hard.

Schwartz took Harry aside.

"We're not leaving till the morning, son, so you can just go back to your barracks or wherever you are. . . ."

"Come by here in the morning. . . ."

Finger laughed some more.

Naturally Waxman roared with laughter when Harry told him.

"Give my regards to Mrs. Tisch!" he sputtered through his tears.

"Why?" Harry asked.

"You're going to Wildbad aren't you?"

"Sure, but why should I see her?"

"Are you driving?" Halliday asked.

"No."

"Then you'll wind up at Frau T's. That's her little Southern Fried Chicken . . . her colonel mammy boy . . . the one who came here with her, the telephone, remember?"

"Console yourself, Heinrich my friend,"—a joke of Waxman's, to call them all by their German names—"You can sport with the smaller of the two dachshunds."

"There's no reason why you should be denied recreational facilities," Halliday added.

Waxman was still young, younger even than Harry. His jokes, if not the best of jokes, were usually funny enough to make Harry laugh; they had some bite. He was often his own subject. He reminded Harry of Levine in the way he liked to hold himself up to a certain ridicule and pipe the Jewish fool. But the country around him provided the best foil. It was Tchermans and the Tchermans. They were an old people; clicking their heels, bowing, lugging satchels, chugging in steam-cars, combing their long Nordic tresses. Waxman mimed their idiosyncracies. But the humour occasionally went from these mimes, and something else showed underneath, uneasiness, hatred.

He was cultivated, for instance. He liked good things but, like many in his generation, he was ashamed of liking them. This did not prevent him from sitting up nights reading Movie Romances, which he borrowed from Gerda, the maid. He said he would be goddamned if he would spend his whole time in Germany listening to Beethoven and Bach and reading bound sets of Goethe and Schiller. Goddam dull people, he said.

"It's not really that," he said as Harry was leaving, "It's just that they're so goddam Tcherman."

HARRY, ANXIOUS to take his disgust seriously, walked over to see George Hartman. The two colonels bothered him, not just in grotesqueness, but in suggestions of lechery, and, if he were forced to admit it, in their age-old acceptance of the privilege of power, power Harry did not have, the power to take no task too seriously.

"What do you care?" George asked him cryptically. Harry knew what George was going to say. Hadn't he been listening to him every night that week? That all this was a basic condition of life, that some men, or most men George intimated, held themselves pretty cheap, and that only the young and the politically naïve were concerned. He tried to change the subject.

"And Mrs. Tisch?" Harry asked. "You know she came back that night. That was why Larry wanted me out of the house."

Same answer from George.

"I'll tell you why," Harry answered. "I'm peculiar. I think it's disgusting to sleep with a woman twice your age. You get old quickly enough yourself."

"And when you get to be her age, will you think it disgusting to sleep with a woman half your age?"

"Christ, George. This isn't philosophy. It's the way we're made. We don't mate with our mothers."

"There's more philosophy to that than you think. . . ."

Harry started to reply, but George interrupted him mildly, taking his pipe out of his mouth and rubbing it against his nose: "Why don't you find out your real reasons?"

His real reasons? Harry walked back to the CIC house with that problem, feeling thoroughly dissatisfied with the way he had explained himself to George. He thought Hartman had been patronising and wondered how many young men had been faced with the same paradox, that, of course, Porteous was free to do what he wanted, and he, Harry, couldn't be

concerned . . . but did that prevent him from being revolted, and wishing that Porteous did not have that freedom?

But then by an unpleasant turn of irony, the paradox, in a different form, was brought vividly home to him. A note from Porteous had been tacked on his door at the CIC house: a Fräulein Mikey, or something like that, called. She would like to come next weekend. He was to call *Stars and Stripes*. She didn't want me instead, Porteous had added maliciously.

If only she had wanted Porteous instead! The word responsibility recurred to Harry like a nightmare. But I won't be back before the weekend, he said to himself, I'll be in Wildbad. I won't be back and she'll find out somehow. No, I'll write her. I won't call her because she'll turn noble on me. Perhaps in the back of Harry's mind was an idea that he really did want to see her. It was always a possibility, that he might fall in love with her, that some day he might really need her.

And it was too bad, he repeated to himself. If someone, if I, could love her like a fool, keep her from dashing her foot against a stone, think of her first, give her something, some happiness, some love! But I don't love her. I can't love her. The impossibilities rose up in his mind, a legion of expediences. Was marriage in question? Impossible. She ought to know that. She had said once, when Harry wouldn't answer her question about whether she was pretty, that she knew she wasn't. I never did come out, she said. I never was beautiful, not even that once when every girl is supposed to be beautiful. Then, remembering that she was barely eighteen, he had chaffed her: 'he had a lot of time yet to bloom, he said; but somehow she was right. The moment had passed.

Still, that wasn't it. She was everything she should be. What was not right? At first it had seemed to be purely Mieke, and he had learned nothing about himself. It had been her birthday and they had celebrated, not without cruelty and not without pleasure. But she had made the move and he had watched, pleased with himself, afraid for himself. He had gone then, vanished. From Garmisch he had written, perhaps

because of Grace, perhaps in spite of Grace. But seeing Grace and feeling for Grace had suddenly put Mieke in focus; the blur of Esslingen sprang into sharpness. He remembered details of Mieke's clothing, smells, words that had passed between them. And he had written. He knew it wasn't her fault, but when he had seen her again, she had wanted him too much. The blur returned; he wasn't able to see that much love, or need, or desire, all at once. It was as though she had injected a new element, and she deserved love; she even deserved *his* love. But that was not the question. There was himself.

And when he looked at himself he saw a passionate selfishness. It was not a fine thing, unless he gave it a better name, which he tried to do, calling it self-preservation, or fear, or Youth. But it was not the first, for he knew and had always known he would be preserved. That was always strongest in him, this dimly perceived survival; that he had perceived it at all was due to an occasional awareness of his bluntness and basic hardness of soul. He didn't find that particularly admirable either. Nor was it fear, because he had no cause to fear Mieke; she only loved him, and would, and wanted to disappear right before his eyes rather than seem to desire him too much. The last was the flimsiest excuse of all. What he had not been too young to start he was surely old enough to finish. He could only conclude that it was passionate selfishness.

Harry reached the end of his reasoning, looked at himself, and saw himself for a moment. But all the things that passed through his mind passed through in less than a minute; then he shirked them. Mieke was still there, and would probably always be there, but, at the time, he didn't mean this to be an insult. His mind had already glossed over that little satisfaction and that little tremor of doubt.

"WILL YOU get the car? It has four holes," Rabeau was saying the following morning. "You'll find it in the major's garage." The Buick was resplendent with side-mirrors, spotlights, and chrome gewgaws; from the rear-view mirror hung a pair of pink satin baby shoes. Rabeau waxed sentimental over these . . . his wife in North Carolina who'd acknowledged that she couldn't be happy over here . . . though I'm telling you, we're giving this country something it never had before. Take this car for instance. *They* never saw anything like this before. Harry, who had to drive the four thousand pounds of bulk over the *Schwarzwald's* tortuous roads, was not quite as enthusiastic as he should have been. After that attempt at conversation the colonels sat back under their rug and ignored Harry for the rest of the trip. From time to time Harry would steal a look at them over the baby shoes in the mirror. They were fathers' faces, but then why ridicule them, Harry thought. They're sitting ducks.

The French operated the Grand Hotel as a pleasure palace in the grand manner. It was there for their own officers on leave and for any Allied officers willing to listen—with a sympathetic ear—to matters of missing supplies, profitable exchanges, plausible reparations . . . in fact all the marvellously mixed business of Occupation. There was gaming, drinking, excellent eating, good company, and *joie de vivre* in abundance. All this in the public rooms on the ground floor. Above, the private rooms offered privacy and all the conveniences.

At their arrival the hotel was in a great stir. At the desk a bearded French lieutenant shouted instructions to a bevy of freshly-trained waitresses. Two old men rolled and unrolled the red plush carpet of the staircase. A fat chambermaid the shape of her cleaner vacuumed the main hall. A small orchestra groped its way through the wicker chairs and potted hydrangeas, bumping their bass fiddles and drums against the lightly fluted columns of the open court.

"Ah yes, Colonel Schwartz, I believe . . . and Colonel Rabeau . . . I beg your pardon, Colonel Rabeau and Colonel Schwartz. Major Fingar telephoned that you were coming." The lieutenant's English was excellent, but Schwartz was rather proud of having an interpreter and introduced Harry with a flourish, forcing Harry and the lieutenant into an awkward conversation about absolutely nothing. The colonels listened with great discrimination to Harry's accent, commenting on it at length to each other. Finally Rabeau could stand it no longer and asked the lieutenant what he thought of their interpreter.

"*Mais Monsieur parle un français exquis,*" the lieutenant said.

"What's he say?" asked Schwartz, anxious to try out the new gadget.

"He says that I speak excellent French. . . ." Harry answered modestly.

"That's fine," Rabeau said admiringly. "Tell him my name is French but I am not." Then the colonel's face darkened momentarily. "Just don't be too French. I don't go for this stuff with beards. . . ."

"Lieutenant Cazalis speaks excellent English, Colonel," Harry said diplomatically.

The Frenchman pretended not to have heard and simultaneously, with great skill, not to have a beard. Harry turned to him.

"*La barbe.* . . ." he said.

Cazalis laughed uproariously, showing two fine rows of teeth. The colonels went off to their rooms, preceded by two bell-boy privates who had emptied the Buick of everything. The baby-shoes hung around the neck of the older of the two. . . .

"*Mon ami,*" Cazalis said when the colonels had withdrawn. "You will find out how revolution is achieved. Enough of these . . ." he pointed after the colonels, "and *POUF!*" He drew his finger dramatically across his throat. "*La Revolution!*"

He and Harry had a good laugh over that and a good time in the bar, then another; by lunch time they were good friends in league against all colonels, including Colonel Livingstone, Colonel Lawrence, Colonel Lindbergh and Colonel Barnum, who, Harry explained, had invented the Egress.

The Park was the place to cool off, the little triangle between the hotel, the Kursaal and the Casino and Harry walked over to clear his head before lunch. It was the Spa's finest hour: smells of pine, not the orange languor of the Mediterranean watering place. Warmed by the sun, clustered around a spruce bandstand, was a semicircular row of stone benches. Dew stood out on the stiff, freshly-cut grass. The grass smelled like fresh limes. A fountain plopped water into an empty stone basin making a noise like trotting horses. The colonels were soon forgotten.

Harry sat on one of the benches, letting his mind wander idly over the past six months. He remembered awe and mysteriousness, but then he had begun in a cloud and a fever. After that there had come a time of boredom, and in a way the boredom was still with him. The country had been one mystery, one object of hatred or desire; now it had broken down . . . the vision was no longer complete. He was moving from one small aspect to another.

A woman in a chic black suit and a small white-winged hat crossed the park from the Kursaal. She looked all around her; her hands were aflutter with adjustments, the capbrim here, the glove there, dove-grey. After having spotted Harry from the extreme end of the Park, she made her little scene of surprise; her face, heavily made up, broke into smiles; she looked up and hurried over to Harry.

"What a wonderful surprise," Mrs. Tisch said. "What brings you here?" Harry stood up.

"Don't get up," she said. "May I sit down next to you?" She straightened her skirt on her knees.

"Where are the dogs?"

Harry was afraid to look at her too directly. The romance

in the air did not carry over to her. Gentle sunlight showed puffs around her eyes.

"I'm having Nana spayed. . . ."

She seemed to falter. Her approach at first had been so confident, so much the woman of the world. Harry thought she wanted to tell him something. She only asked about Larry, making sure to ask after Waxman and Halliday at the same time.

"They're fine," Harry said. "They sent their regards."

Mrs. Tisch flushed slightly.

"When will we be seeing you again at Pforzheim?"

"I wanted to ask you about that. . . ." Mrs. Tisch said, grateful for her opportunity. "You don't think Captain Porteous minded my being there or giving you boys a party?"

Harry made the gallant reply:

"I don't see how he could . . . we all enjoyed it."

Captain Porteous indeed. Wasn't it just like Porteous not to see the improbability of such a story, and like Frau Tisch to accept it?

"How sweet of you to say so. But what are you doing here? You haven't answered." She paused coyly. "I can't hope, I see, that you came to see me. I live not far from here."

Was everybody worth her while? Were the Colonel, Porteous, and he worth the same amount of affection and effort? Harry evaded her suggestion. The Colonel, he said, would be waiting for him. Ah, Mrs. Tisch countered, that would be a surprise. Not, it couldn't be . . . but it was? How wonderful. She was sure he would join them for lunch, all of them; she had just been going to the hotel to inquire. Harry would, and he could answer for the colonels. He was sure they had nothing else to do.

THEY LUNCED with a professional *bon viveur*, a Colonel Henri Richepin. He ordered exquisite wines with exquisite discrimination while Rabeau made his *gaffes* about the stuff in a shell they ate before the meal. Ah, the colonel begged leave to apologise to the colonel, it was a poor apology for a coquille St. Jacques; its crude origin should never obtrude. Schwartz and Rabeau played their parts with their best manners from the Point, Mrs. Tisch preventing Rabeau from mopping up his *pâté* with his bread, and Schwartz showing the utmost in familiarity. It was an exquisite meal, after which Richepin retired, as he put it, to the pleasures of the bed. But the cognac having been rich, and the champagne cocktails at four proving headier, when M. le Colonel came back downstairs, he signalled that the two colonels should be served a simple *vin du pays*, they being long past recognising the difference. Almost simultaneously both decided they too should partake of the pleasures of the bed before dinner and staggered off to their rooms.

Harry woke them up at half past eight and helped them into their best pinks. Their breasts shone with ribbons, their faces with shaving and scrubbing. Harry parried their good-humoured but clumsy attempts at friendship as well as he could. They went out of their way to show their esteem of his many qualities. The esteem wasn't worth much, however, as neither of them had sobered enough to speak coherently.

Picking up Richepin, the bearded Lieutenant Cazalis, Mrs. Tisch, a naval officer in resplendent white uniform, and Sir William Blatter, an official of the Exchequer, and his wife, Lady Blatter, the procession journeyed across the little park to the Casino. Frau Tisch played, lost, but did not stake much. Rabeau, next to her, played the simple chances and won four times in succession on the *pair*. Richepin played 5,000 francs on twenty-nine, and played the same number throughout the

evening. Covering himself with side bets, he did not lose too much. But Schwartz was the lion, losing heavily, steadily, and soberly. At Reno there had been a system, he explained, a system of divided betting . . . perhaps there had been, Mrs. Tisch joked: perhaps the colonel had forgotten the system? Schwartz kept on laying down his chips on the green cloth; he put them down with rapidity and decision, so that no one bothered to note the amount he was losing. This was an injustice to Schwartz. The man was showing nobility, plunging like a Romanov. Obviously excited, he kept making little jokes about his responsibilities as a Fiscal Officer; they were gruff and awkward jokes, and no one but himself would laugh. The rest were playing to watch him lose.

Harry went out to the bar for a drink with his friend Lieutenant Cazalis, but Rabreau would not leave him in peace. Every few minutes he would come out to the bar and pluck nervously at Harry's arm:

"How long will they let him go on? I think you'd better tell Colonel Richepin that we have to be getting back."

Harry tried, to console Rabreau. Richepin looked at him with a startled air.

"Mais vraiment, jeune homme . . . ce n'est pas à moi de m'occuper de votre ami. . . ." Harry thanked him and went back to Schwartz. Cazalis was very sympathetic.

Schwartz was leaning forward in his chair, livid, the top of his bald head mottled and with a vein on it big as an inch worm, bouncing and throbbing.

"Yes, yes," he said to Harry. "You tell Bill I'll be right along. It's about due. . . ." The colonel dropped his voice so that Harry had to bend over the back of his chair. Schwartz took Harry's head in one hand and forced Harry's ear to his mouth.

"Tell him to come here, I'm two and a half million down. . . ." he whispered hoarsely. "That's right, two and a half million down . . . tell the colonel."

Harry pushed his way through the throng around the

table. Richepin barely looked up from his chips which he fingered deftly with his left hand. Frau Tisch gave him a cool brief smile.

Rabeau was barely coherent. He made his brave offer in spite of his fear: that if Harry could square it with Richepin, they'd both be grateful. Harry laughed. He was not angry, but something in Rabeau's expression had struck a deep sense of ridiculousness out of the incredible scenes of the day. There was nothing left to do but laugh. Schwartz wasn't laughing, Harry noted with complete detachment as though Schwartz were just anyone in the crowded room; in fact the colonel was crying.

The Buick was in the hotel garage, polished inside and out, as cleaned out as poor Schwartz, Harry thought. The colonels (in the last moments) had been a great deal more sober. Harry said he was going to get the car. Schwartz sounded quite abstracted:

"Yes, that's it. Get the car. I'll get out some way. You get the car. I'm sure Colonel Richepin is a gentleman."

You can bet your sweet life he'd better be, Harry thought. The table was fixed and Richepin was only waiting for his chance. And that would be that. The garage attendant was gone and the keys were locked in the office. The bell boy took a quarter of an hour to find him and Harry swore at him furiously. Then the colonels had left their rooms in total disorder. It was another half hour before Harry had packed their belongings, stuffing the baby-shoes in one of the suit-cases, the very last things to go in.

When he returned to the Casino at a little past one, he was startled to find both colonels at the bar with a total stranger. The stranger was neatly dressed in a dark grey suit that looked London-made. He leaned against the bar with his right elbow to support him; his left hand played with a pair of yellow kid gloves. At his feet was a fine leather briefcase.

All three of them at the bar looked as pleased as could be. The two colonels were wringing happiness out of themselves.

"Carey," shouted Rabeau. "Come over here, son, and be quick about it."

Schwartz offered Harry a drink. His own glass shook in his hand.

"The car's ready," Harry said to Rabeau.

"Carey, I'd like you to meet. . . ."

"You really ought to have a drink, son. . . ." Schwartz said, Harry refusing.

"I'd like you to meet Baron von Kreilsheim."

Harry started slightly at the name, then shook hands with the Baron.

"The car's ready. We really ought to be going."

"Don't be foolish, son, everything's all right now. . . ."

Rabeau took Harry aside. Harry noticed that the colonel had begun drinking again.

"The Baron offered to pay Bill's debts. It's all arranged. Now let him have a good time. . . ."

"Who's going to pay the Baron?"

"I think he said it could be arranged with the French. They might settle for part. . . ."

"On that loaded table, Colonel? That's not what they're after."

"I'm sure Bill intends to pay his debts. . . ."

The Baron was looking over their way. Harry lowered his voice.

"But they don't want his money."

Rabeau looked surprised.

"What do they want then?"

"That's what we'll have to find out. But get the colonel out of here. . . ."

"But the Baron. . . ."

"Do you know who the Baron is?"

"No."

"I do. . . ."

At first he hadn't remembered the name. It was the Baron's handshake that had reminded him, reminded him of Creeley.

The Baron had the same kind of hand, pliant, soft, warm, a little fat. You'll meet him some day, Creeley had said. He lives in Waldkirch in the French Zone. But Waldkirch was in the South, near the Bodensee. What brought the Baron up to the modern Baden Baden? The commandant was an extraordinary man, Creeley had said.

"Well?" Rabeau asked. "What about him?"

"I know him, Colonel. You'll have to believe me."

"I don't have to do anything," Rabeau said pugnaciously. "You seem to forget. . . ."

"Isn't that what *you* want *me* to do?" Harry asked pointedly.

Rabeau saw the point. He lured Schwartz away from the Baron. Richepin was *désolé* to see them go. Cazalis shook Harry's hand warmly. Mrs. Tisch wanted them to stay the night at her little villa, but Rabeau had understood very well. He was not even resentful. He explained that Colonel Schwartz was not feeling very well.

"I haven't thanked the Baron. I must say good-bye. . . ." Schwartz said.

"Come on, Bill," Rabeau interrupted, "you can put it in a letter."

Just outside Calw Harry stopped the car and let Schwartz out behind some trees. When he returned to them he was still shaky, but partly coherent. Harry made him sit on the running board for a few minutes and then asked him if he remembered what the Baron had said.

"Come on Carey, this is hardly the time or the place. . . ." Rabeau sounded insecure.

"It's important, Colonel. Please try to remember. Now, what did von Kreilsheim say?"

"He said he'd arrange it with Colonel Richepin. He said not to worry about it. He said he had done Richepin some favours."

"What else?"

"He said he could probably get them to settle it for half."

I think I have that. It's about five thousand. . . . If I don't have it, I can get it."

"Go on. . . ."

"He said . . . he said that I'd better send him what I could right away."

"Why . . . did he say?"

"I don't remember . . . he said. . . ."

"You do remember, Colonel, come on . . . I'm trying to help."

"He said if I waited too long it probably wouldn't be worth anything."

"Yes, yes. . . ."

"Bill!" Rabeau said.

"He said we were changing scrip weren't we? And I said yes, we were pulling in all the old scrip . . . it isn't important is it?" Schwartz looked up pleadingly at Rabeau. "What difference would it make to him. He won't have any scrip."

"Bill!" Rabeau sounded horrified. "You didn't give him the date for Christ's sake!"

"Yes, I did. . . ." Schwartz broke down completely and put his head in his hands. "I had no choice. He said it so jokingly. I'd drunk too much I guess . . . yes, I told him."

"Come on," Harry said, helping him into the back seat. "Lie down there and try and get some sleep."

"Even I don't know the date," Rabeau said. "It's worth a fortune!"

Harry tried to reassure him.

"It doesn't mean anything. We can get the date changed now. . . ."

"Yes, but anyone can dump the stuff from now till then."

"As long as they don't know the actual day, it's all right. You can put the date ahead."

"You won't say anything about it?" Rabeau looked right into Harry's eyes.

"You're going to have to tell anyway. . . ."

"My God, my God. . . ."

Baron Gunther von Kreilsheim, Mrs. Tisch, Captain Creeley . . . only one name was missing from the constellation: Larry Porteous.

That night Schwartz slept on the great iron bedstead in Harry's room, and Colonel Rabeau downstairs on the cot in the office.

35

BREAKFAST TABLE conversation was both weird and illuminating. Only Waxman showed delicacy, delicacy that he maliciously mixed with irony. Both he and Halliday were tactful, but after a half hour of chit-chat it became apparent that the colonels were awaiting the other agents' departure to have their reckoning with Harry. This reckoning Harry rather dreaded. He was not noble enough to be indignant about another clumsy overture of bribery, nor venal enough to take it quite in his stride.

They began offishly enough.

"I suppose you knew these people before?"

Schwartz amplified: "I mean you had met them?"

Rabeau entered on the same note:

"The French colonel and the fellow with the beard . . . you had met ~~them~~ somewhere?"

"I never saw them before yesterday," Harry answered. "In fact I've only been here a few days. . . ." Schwartz looked at him without any expression in his face.

"But you were in Karlsruhe before that. . . ."

"About a week, yes. . . ." Had Mrs. Tisch told them? Harry didn't remember mentioning Karlsruhe. Rabeau composed his face into patience.

"You knew Baron what's-his-name. . . ."

"I had heard his name."

"Did you know who he was?"

"I'd heard. . . ."

"You knew he was a prominent figure in French espionage?"

"He was head of German intelligence in the Mediterranean area. . . ."

"That table was fixed . . . did you know that?"

"I told the colonel here. . . ." Harry turned to Rabeau. Schwartz paid no attention to Harry's answer.

"If I thought . . ." he said, ". . . if I thought that you knew about it, in any way, deliberately. . . ."

"What are you implying, Colonel?"

"I'm not implying anything, Carey. I'm telling you. You can consider yourself fortunate. Colonel Rabeau and I talked this over. We've given you the benefit of the doubt . . . that settled the matter as far as we're concerned. . . ."

Harry understood at last. In a short half-hour before breakfast, both on sleepless nights, they had hatched this ingenious reversal of fortune. Who would take his word against theirs? The baron was hardly likely to testify against himself. The date of the currency exchange would remain exactly the same, and a tidy profit be made for the few thousand they had risked.

The day ahead was a busy one. Harry rose from the table without ceremony. Schwartz insisted on his point:

"The matter's settled . . . you understand that, right?"

"You'll excuse me," Harry said.

Rabeau wiped his chin with his napkin, and Schwartz nodded.

Harry decided to submit his report, and let that vouch for his integrity. Otherwise he no longer cared, except to reflect that he was, at least temporarily, out of his depth; he had underestimated the company he was in.

Harry had sent his report in and now waited. In all of Pforzheim there was only the preparation for the Great

Visitation, the arrival of the Honorable Gentleman from I—, Rep. Mike Vortz. That seemed to occupy all of MG's time. The dull week ended, another was about to begin. Investigations were on neutral, tentative ground now. Harry and George made the rounds of the DP camps, kept in close touch with paid-up KPD members in Kreis Pforzheim, and generally felt out the new ground.

Then, abruptly, the dull week came to an end. The letter came in the morning pouch: Harry had exceeded his authority in sending in a report, the facts as stated by Colonels Rabeau and Schwartz had been verified, any repetition would lead to removal from the CIC; and demotion to Pfc. was the least he could expect.

"Who the hell told you to send in a report?" Porteous asked almost immediately. "And why didn't I see it?"

"You should be able to answer that one," Harry answered.

"That's enough sarcasm out of you," Porteous answered. "They bucked it down because it didn't have my endorsement."

"Pfc. eh?" Waxman whistled. They were all sitting at breakfast in the dining room. "You must have had them by the short hairs."

"Mrs. Tisch ought to be tickled anyway," Halliday added.

"You're barking up the wrong tree," Porteous said.

"Am I?"

Harry tried to read the expression in Porteous' eyes. The sergeant was chewing his small knuckles.

"Mrs. Tisch won't even speak to you any more," Waxman jeered, handing the letter on to Halliday. "A Pfc. indeed!"

"She ought to be too rich to bother with sergeants either," Harry said. He knew anger was a mistake with Porteous, but he couldn't help himself. Porteous showed a little white around the eyes.

"You'd better go upstairs Harry. . . . I'm still running this outfit."

"Thanks, I'll stay here. What do you get out of this?"

Waxman withdrew, drawing Halliday out with him. It was Porteous' turn to anger.

"Since you insist on bringing myself and Mrs. Tisch into this, let me tell you a few things. She's been working for me nearly a year. She's done a lot of things for me. She's done better things than that the piece of tripe you sent up to Headquarters . . . yes, I read it. . . . She's a fine woman who's suffered a great deal. Frankly I don't care if what you said in your report is true and you watched them lose the whole bloody Army payroll to the French. It was none of your business. Katherine said she would have had everything under control if you hadn't taken over. She was advancing the money through von Kreilsheim. He knew her and was indebted to her from better days. . . ."

"Just a minute, Porteous . . . since we're being so damned honest. What about the date when the scrip would be changed? You know that date's worth a hundred times what they lost. What about that?"

"She told me all about that. Schwartz didn't want to let anyone know who was paying for him . . . to cover up he told a fictitious date and made the French believe that he was being paid for the information. . . ."

"Christ!" Harry interrupted. "Are you asking me to believe he went through all that to spare Mrs. Tisch's precious honour? Are you trying to tell me that drunken farce wasn't a drunken farce, but a bit of top-flight acting? I suppose I didn't see him puking himself all to hell?"

"Let me tell you something, Harry . . . since you don't seem to see it clearly. You're the boy who's in the soup, not me. I advise you to forget all that you saw. Forget it. Imagine it never happened. You never saw any colonel puking. I'm your friend and I can give you a story. Perhaps you can make someone believe the story I give you and maybe that way you'll climb out of it, I don't know. That's a point in

doubt. But don't go flinging it back in my teeth. Use it. Or forget it. But don't give me a hard time."

"It's all been a terrible misunderstanding," Harry said sarcastically.

"That, my boy, is about it."

36

HARRY WANTED a walk. His anger was getting the better of him and it took the better part of an hour for him to realise that he had gone out of his depth in sending in a report on the colonels. But once he realised this, that the colonels might really have been acting deliberately, Harry's pride was hurt: he did not like being used as a pawn. And for some reason that he couldn't properly explain, he liked even less being used as one in front of the baron.

No haze hovered over the town, which was rare in August. Buildings, irregularities in terrain: these had additional complexities of depth away and depth down, shapes he had never seen or never noticed. Black hollows leapt across the river from the ghost of the Frauenkirche. Fire, fanned by fire, and sucked up in the vacuum after the fire wall, had scorched the hills on the west to their tops, trees and telegraph poles to their stumps. Harry walked down into the town and then up on to one of the hills.

He had forgotten the smell that a brief month ago had gagged him; today he could stroll through the ruins at home with himself and with them. When he got to the top of the hill, he had walked the anger out of himself. Dust had a mustard smell and the wind blew over his shoulder from the west. Up there the possibility of error was strong. The report he had sent in was wrong, the act of a child. And Mrs. Tisch? Why not? Why shouldn't her poise, the overdeliberate chic, the fading expansiveness of her conversation be a façade

behind which lurked spectres of sorrow and loss? Their moments together brought forth no image that could refute Porteous in what he said. What was more, Thanatopolous and the colonels were of the same cloth, indifference towards them being the proper mood for Harry. What could he accomplish there that would not reduce him in the process? Right or wrong, it was not his affair. This was another country. Its laws were perhaps evasive, veiled . . . but any the less valid for that?

A moment later this cynicism seemed more fashionable than true. Harry isn't like that, he said to himself. Harry believes or Harry doesn't believe. But, he pointed out to himself, it was also true to say that Harry believed one moment and disbelieved the next. The ups and downs took on a sort of equivalence. There were peaks and plunges, confidences and betrayals, hurts to him and hurts by him. In short Harry Carey was the sum of all of these movements, and still in movement. But then Harry Carey was something else too, something lazy and indifferent. He was at that time when men hover between merciless self-appreciation and comforting illusion, and with not much intention of altering the balance of the two. The balance was observation, or was it?

Harry stopped in mid-thought. The noise, after the noon hour, of workmen ripping down walls and bricking-up streets, distracted him. Power shovels, bulldozers, shovel-men, hoe-men swarmed below him. He lost his mood. He wanted to be angry with himself, for, being angry, he could see himself. But he could not help it. He was happy. The wind was warm, the air clear. The rest was illusion. That was when he decided that he ought to see Mieke, that he ought to answer her note, if only to tell her that he was happy, and perhaps make her a little happier.

It is as true to say that a man has stopped thinking as to say that he has thought anew. Thinking is too much of the whole man to be twisted around, shaped and reshaped. A man stops completely. He experiences a conversion. That is the line

from Saul of Tarsus to Arthur Koestler. If you're less of a man, you might have less of a vision, and if you're hardly a man, you'll have hardly a vision. You'll slip into change without knowing it, which is why change will always remain a thing of wonder. When you see it, it is accomplished. That was what happened to Harry.

From Pforzheim to Stuttgart, Harry was deeply in love. There had been no revelation. Mieke had become important, or was it simply that he had become less important? Suddenly she looked good. She had never complained, never spoken a word of herself. New ideas having filtered in, old ones vanished. Mieke had not pursued him, he'd escaped her and himself. Stuttgart looked different. It was an archipelago with islands of chimneys, steeples, walls and roofs. The great cobbled road down into the sudden heat from the punchbowl was no longer the same. He could see the city in new ways; ruins took on other meanings. They weren't so much a fact as an interpretation. He was seeing shapes and he chose to call them ruins. He could use imagination to make Germany bloom, or bypass the country altogether, to stay out of the morass. He was free for two days. Wasn't that difference enough?

37

NOW, HOW to find her? She quit *Stars and Stripes* at one Saturdays; neither he nor they had her address. So, find it from memory, he told himself. But it was not so easy. The navigation had been by night, and with her. In the bright moon-light the hills were less steep, distances shorter. There were false starts and detours until he remembered the round funnels of the brick kiln; then he was there in minutes, excited and afraid. He was in love, whose proper condition is fear, fear of not being in love.

Where was she? He had been knocking some minutes, knowing well that she could not be inside that cubby hole without his hearing her. From one of the neighbouring insides emerged a man about sixty, bent under a clumsy iron stove.

Harry gave him a hand. The old man wanted to carry it downstairs. He was going to sell it.

"I don't need it in summer," the old man said in a thick Baden accent. He wiped the tip of his nose with a spotted handkerchief.

"I'm sure you don't Grandfather, but let me help you with it?"

"Thank you, I'm sure. The young men have all gone out."

Together they lifted it down the stairs. It seemed to Harry about two hundred pounds of dead weight.

"How did you lift it?"

"I'll show you when we get to the bottom," the old man answered gleefully. "I'm seventy-five years old." He grunted stopping on each landing to catch his breath. "Before the War I am a weight lifter. In Hamburg."

"You're still better than I am. . . ."

"You were looking for the Fräulein," the old man said when they reached the bottom of the stairs.

"You know her?"

"And who found her this room when we came down from Hamburg? She was in Hamburg then." The old man shouted, as though volume alone could make the foreigner understand. "Yes, she was in Hamburg. She was working for the Englander."

"You know where she is?"

"You are going to marry her? My daughter married an Ami. She is now Mrs. Sergeant Dawes. She lives in Pookipsi."

"Can't you tell me where she is? It's rather important."

"Oh she is a good girl. She does not run around like the rest. You can marry her."

The old man rested on the stoop. His eyes gleamed when Harry lighted a cigarette and gave him the rest of the

pack. "No babies you know." The old man put his hands down by his knees to show the size of babies.

"Where is she?" Harry was impatient.

"She will be up the hill. At her friend I expect. . . ."

"Good-bye Grandfather. I will find her."

The old man bent over his stove.

"You don't want to see how I lift it?"

"Another time, old man, I have to go. . . ."

The old man looked ruefully at the jeep.

"All the young men have gone out. . . ."

Harry knew there were no young men.

"All right Grandfather. You are seventy-five years too clever for me. Come on, I will take your stove, and you can show me where she is."

The old man lifted up the stove and dropped it in the back of the jeep.

"You'll see, we will find her quickly. The ironmonger is just at the bottom of the hill."

Not of that hill, apparently, nor several others. They skirted the catastrophic sections of Stuttgart, then found themselves in the villa and rock garden area, and finally were back in the ruins.

"Up this road," the old man said, pointing up a track over the rubble. .

"But where's your iron man?" Harry asked.

"Iron Man . . . that was what I call myself before the War. In Hamburg. I was a weight-lifter."

"Your stove. . . ."

"You must go to the Fräulein first. She will be pleased to see you. She is very good-looking, I think. Just like my daughter. She also married an Ami. They have four children."

The old man babbled on happily.

"How about your stove?" Harry asked.

"No, no," the old man answered impatiently. "That is on the other side of town. You do not want to go there." He pointed to a house a few hundred yards away. On the side of

the hill, a burned out railway car, a half-mile from the yards, lay flat on its side, nestling in the bricks. It had grown orange with rust.

"All right, you wait for me here," Harry said. He locked the steering wheel with his handcuffs. The old man hopped out after him.

"Wait here," Harry repeated. He heard the old man following behind him, but ignored his conversation. The ex-weight-lifter stumbled and tripped on the loose debris. A fine powder like plaster stirred wherever they walked.

"Her name is Amalie Schwitters . . . the friend's name."

"Stay down will you?" Harry asked. The old man followed Harry up the stairs. There was nothing to be done.

"There, that door." The old man sprang past Harry and knocked on the door.

"Hercin. . . ."

The old man walked in ahead of Harry. Mieke was on the couch, Amalie by the hot plate. Harry stayed on the landing.

"Come in, come in," the old man said. "Fräulein Mieke I have brought you your man . . . you see, I have brought him. Come in, come in."

"Come in Harry," Mieke said simply.

"I am Herr Gottfried Keller. Iron Man." He lifted a chair at arm's length from his body. "Can you do that?"

"You're a nice old man," Mieke said. "Don't you want to go home?"

"Mikki . . . will the Amerikaner want lemon in his tea?" Amalie whispered.

"No lemon . . . that's fine." Harry sat down uncomfortably next to Mieke on the couch. There was a long silence.

"We weren't exactly expecting you. . . ." Mieke said.

"I know. Will you come with me . . . now?"

He looked mutely at Mieke. She seemed tired. Her eyes were dark and her skin drawn.

"Amalie darling. *Kein Thé*. We are going."

"But my stove. . . ." the old man hurried after them.

Harry dug into his pocket. He had no idea what the stove was worth. He pulled out a hundred marks.

"Here, I'll buy it."

The old man took the money and ran quickly down the steps. He was gone when they reached the bottom, but they had stopped for a kiss on each landing.

"I am now a Pfc." said Harry, as though this were a great weight of his mind.

"You silly boy," Mieke teased him. "He does that to every American. They see an old man with a stove. They offer to help him; he takes them all over; they can't get rid of him. Then they buy it. Really, you Americans must be children."

"Then we must be happy. . . ." Harry answered gaily.

"When you are happy, perhaps. . . ."

"Was he a weight-lifter?"

Mieke laughed.

"He was a furniture mover. . . ."

"And had he been to Hamburg? Did he know you there? Did he find you your room?"

"Not one of those things. . . ."

"Good for him!"

38

IT WAS a long drive from Stuttgart to Oberwald am Tauber, the place for an idyll; steep slopes, a sour grape smell, no sun on the vines which face north and east, earth seeping through chinks in the terraces. The colour of the place: yellow and grey, crude unripened green. A village lost in the valley; lost where wars, feuds, bickering have left it, where no plundering baron bothered to plunder. A village defended by a castle . . . really a mortgage with keep and portcullis. Below the rock the village is like an inner court to the castle, all muck and manure, cows slithering fetlock-deep, geese and pigs basking on steps.

Trysting! thought Mieke. We are both shy, awkward. I cannot use the same words as before, not the same gestures. If I could say to him: I love you so much, I must have you, I must, and I hate you for not wanting me the same way. I hate you. Let's talk. Let's talk of childhood. Watch him, he'll make promises, the matter will have careful attention. I'll think about it, he'll answer. What about your birthday, Mieke? Wasn't that a little spark of pride when you said you had gone to the Meeting just for your birthday, hoping. . . . A spark of pride in *him*. He can't trust himself to think like that. But he doesn't mean it. He's sitting between promise and reality. When the heart is moved, it comes easily, promises froth to the mouth; then falter in the mind.

Already he's considering where we go from here. What are the possibilities? Given that I am a German, too big, ugly, pale, tired, cry too much, and love him. What can he do with that? Wrap it all up in a bag and send it along to someone worthy. He won't be worthy, that's the next shift of line. But it's sickening that you should have sat four months in Stuttgart, sick to the soul, wanting, waiting . . . you, Mieke, are the one to be ashamed. You're not worthy. You might try being hard like Harry. Except that he's not hard but just ignorant.

There's hope for modern man, Mieke, he does know how to hate. Not even personally, as he used to, but in large numbers. Not his neighbour, not his ruler, or even another nation. He's expanded his hate to cover continents. But this boy is almost a primitive. He hates only you.

There he is, lying on his back, his head on his hand, talking into the darkness. He lights a cigarette for you and puts it right to your lips. You can see his face when he sucks on the cigarette. What is he saying? That he was cruel, wasn't he?

"No Harry, not cruel."

Of course he wasn't cruel. Admit it, you loved to be beaten like that. Let's talk of childhood, Harry. Let's not talk about you and me. Let me tell you some of the rotten things that

happen to me. I didn't love to be beaten. I wanted you to tell me just what I ought to be. I would have been it, no matter what you said. Or I would have tried.

All this doesn't mean anything, Mieke. He wants to be alone. He wants to escape. He can't listen. He doesn't even hear you. Oh yes, he'll console you. He thinks that's what you want.

In fact, it was just that Harry did. To love her as she wanted to be loved. . . . No, he tried to stop her mouth with kisses, the words still sprang out on breaths, and short of wrenching himself apart inside . . . stop Mieke, stop . . . stop it. In pressing himself on her he wanted to stop not only her suffering, but the world's, and all besides. But she struggled, the words still came out. She fell into uneasy tears of pain and pleasure and groped for him in the dark.

But in the morning the idyll began to sour. They breakfasted in bed together, on sweet rolls and sweet butter, and bittersweet black coffee in blue flowered mugs. Harry wanted to go on a walk to the castle.

"I can't get up," Mieke said. "I can't get up."

Harry was at the basin, washing his face and neck.

"Come on," he said, throwing open the windows, "it's going to rain. . . ."

A mist lay on the river in patches, now solid like a cloud bank, now wispy; sudden updraughts split it into layers making ladders up the vineyard walls.

"I can't get up."

"Why not?"

"How should I know. I can't get up."

"Don't you want to take a walk?"

"If you want me to go with you. . . ."

"I'm going . . . you'd better get up."

She dressed, first dipping her whole face in the basin, in Harry's water. Her face came out shining and blue.

"Look at this dress," she said. "I was not expecting you

"It's fine," Harry answered with a touch of impatience, holding a towel for her.

"And if it weren't . . . what would I wear?"

"I'll get you a better one. . . ."

"I don't want one. I don't want anything like that from you."

He said yes, but meant to get her one. Her hair was wet and it clung to her cheek. It was always heavy and falling somewhere.

When they went out they found the castle garden grey as whetstone.

"I could swear someone was looking at us. . . ." Harry said, dropping her hand.

"That's fine, let them look." She waved at one of the many blank windows in the stone.

"The rain's coming."

They ate a modest lunch, and the afternoon lay ahead of them. It was a long afternoon. The expected rain came. The sky filled up, pressed down on them. The river grew shallow and grey. Along the Tauber's banks the cows settled to their knees. There were long silences. Every once in a while they would insult each other, but it was all on a joking tone.

"If you're tired, why don't you go upstairs and take a rest?" Mieke shook her head. "I'll take a little walk," Harry said.

"In the rain?"

"I like the rain. Besides, it's not raining so hard any more."

"All right, I'll lie down for a while. I must be tired. You'll come and wake me up?"

But she could not stay long on the white counterpane, in the white room. Memories pressed on her. The sun had come out briefly. It left patterns of mist, Japanese puzzles on the hills. She saw Harry walking slowly along the river bank. He stopped to throw a stone into the Tauber. He looked big and heavy in his parka. It was the same parka he had thrown

over her shoulders in the jeep that night. She could remember its rubbery smell. She ran out to meet him.

"Did you have a nice sleep?"

"I did not sleep. I was thinking. . . ."

She felt sorry, in the silence that followed, for the difficulty he was having getting it out. They both knew the idyll had soured . . . why couldn't he say so?

"Don't you think you ought to be thinking about getting back before it's dark?" she asked. She did not look at his face, afraid to see him relieved. He looked at his watch, let his hand drop, and then looked at it again.

"I said I would be back in Pforzheim tonight, and it's a good long drive to Stuttgart. . . ."

"You can get back by dark."

"Yes, it's a good thing we didn't go too far. . . ."

She let it pass, and they walked back to the inn together. Mieke stayed outside while Harry settled their account. Innkeeper and wife appeared on the front steps to wave good-bye. They must come back again. It was such a beautiful place. And had they gone up to the castle?

"We went up," Harry answered.

"It was fine," Mieke shouted to them, pulling Harry's parka about her. "We'll be back."

39

A WEEK later, and without their knowing it more than twice in every hour, the day was come. Jumping pudgily from the Mercury with the three stars on the hood were a figure and a face worth newsprint and radio time since Harry's childhood adulation of Franklin D. Roosevelt, only not in wirephoto, but in shell grey, real, lined, rather fatter than Harry had remembered. The face disappointed, being simply good-humoured, bluff and expectant.

Harry was standing on the steps of Major Fingar's house with Captain Tupper, the major's aide. Tupper stood next to Harry, but a little behind him.

"There now," Harry was saying to him. "That's not so alarming. . . ."

"No-o," Tupper agreed. "But I do hope he doesn't make any trouble." He took Harry's arm forcefully. "Look, don't you think Fingar overdoes it? I think the man's crude, the way he shakes hands. I've always told him he puts it on too hard. There's nothing wrong with the Army that he has to shake every civilian's hand like he wants to kiss it."

Harry looked with surprise at Tupper. He'd always wondered what made the captain tick.

A lieutenant with an MG armband held the door open, a lieutenant with sandy hair, lost in the aura of the senator. The senator shook some dust off an immaculately new leather coat.

"Hot as Hades," Harry heard. "Got the damn thing in Ulm . . . the mayor gave it to me. Seems they make leather there, or cows . . . some damn fool thing." Harry laughed. The senator was leafing through a notebook he had pulled out of the leather coat.

"What the hell they make here? Doesn't look like they make much. Who the hell did that out there?" He pointed vaguely behind him. The blue haze of Pforzheim.

"Let me help you off with your coat, Senator," Fingar said. The coat came off with much tugging of stiff leather.

"Wouldn't have worn it at all. But didn't have any damn room for it . . . not even in your suitcase, right Shattuck?" The senator was addressing the lieutenant, who did not answer.

"Tupper, come on down here," Fingar beckoned, seeing that the senator's procession to the front door was likely to be slow. Tupper left Harry, all apologies, and advanced deferentially.

"My exec., Captain Tupper . . . Senator Vortz." Tupper put out his hand and the senator swallowed it in his.

"Take the senator's coat," Fingar said, bundling it into Tupper's arms.

"Mr. Vortz is the Representative from the 12th Congressional district in I——," the lieutenant said. Fingar looked at him pointedly.

"Ah yes," Vortz said. "The right arm. Lieutenant . . . Lieutenant. . . ."

"Shattuck, sir . . . glad to know you." He shook Fingar's hand.

"Hahvud. . . ." Vortz said. "Knows every burg in Germany, the lingo, the facts, the people to meet . . . he's coming along on my next campaign . . . how about it Shattuck?" The senator suddenly looked serious. "You understand I don't have time to take in just raw facts. Shattuck does that for me. I *analyse*." The representative seemed to like the word. He tapped his forehead significantly. "Yes, sir, I was sent over here to present a concise report to my committee on just how things stand. A concise report. That is the nature of the information I want, sir. Concise. I want to know all about Hallsheim, but I want it concise."

"Hallsheim is tomorrow, sir," Shattuck corrected unobtrusively. "This is Pforzheim."

"I want it concise, Major. Not just a lot of opinions. What is it here, Major? Used bricks?"

"Jewelry, sir. This is the third largest centre in Europe, or was. Parts for watches. Bomb-sights, precision instruments."

"Well I suppose the burgmeister will load me down with another engraved cigarette case. . . . You take this one Shattuck. I've got enough."

"Yes, sir."

Fingar stood as close as possible to Vortz. It was like trying to steer a big ship. The representative was in no hurry.

FINGAR HAD been flabbergasted by the Vortz smile. He babbled to the representative as though he had known him all his life, and long before lunch had fixed a tennis game for the afternoon, joining Harry to the party with a single look from his pale blue eyes.

"Not that I play too well," Vortz was saying. "Last time I played was . . . let me see . . . we did get a game, didn't we, Shattuck?"

"Yes, sir. You lost two sets to General Billingsly."

"I did?" The representative gave one of his renowned laughs. "Weren't you playing with me then?"

"You won two sets after that from Herr Mayer. . . ."

"Love to keep trim, just love it. Makes a man feel good. You play with me, young man," Vortz said, turning to Harry. "No offence, Major, but I'd rather play with young blood. Can't get around like I used to. Got a bad hip like poor Bob Taft."

"We haven't planned anything else," Fingar said. "We thought we'd leave that open. Except for an official lunch of course . . . the Landrat and so on. . . ." The major made the luncheon sound like a complete bore to him, though he had been planning it for two weeks.

"You know I speak pretty good German, considering. German name, Vortz. Fellow in Munich . . . now there's a town . . . told me it was probably Wurzburg once, got corrupted, he said. Couldn't be, though. What was it you said Wurzburg was, Shattuck?"

"Sausage, sir. . . ."

"Haw, haw. Couldn't be! Sausage. He wasn't a very smart fellow. One of those socialists, but you've got to meet them. Uncle Sam's ambassador. Not exactly the way to get appropriations though, come to think of it."

The conversation went on in the same vein. In a half-hour,

Vortz had mentally dismissed them all. They weren't going anywhere, so he could afford to be jolly with them.

Just as Fingar had feared, the first guests, half an hour early, were Professor and Frau Professor Winternitz from the Technische Hochschule in Karlsruhe. Bow and shuffle: Old World courtesy, and the scholar's blindness to his audience. Taken in by Vortz at one quick glance, a toad. The representative had seen them before: bald heads, runny noses, eyes under canopied eyelids, rakish eyebrows, underslung gait. What was the matter with the fellow looking down at his hand when shaking, down at Vortz's hand, down at the major's, down at Carey's, down at his own? Was he afraid to look people in the eye?

A talker too? Vortz put his fingers to the bridge of his nose. Ah, *Excellenz*, you are here to bring prosperity to our country? Yes sir, prosperity to all. The representative took a sheaf of papers from Shattuck and began examining them diligently. Even his wife looked down at her feet. Of course . . . what was the professor saying? . . . "Of course you will be urged many times that this is the only thing you can do in view of the circumstances, to bring prosperity back to our *poor* country. . . ." The way the professor accentuated the word "poor" made Fingar jump.

Just as he had feared. It was Tupper who put the professor on the list. The captain had gone out for drinks. Good for him, or he'd let him have it. Tupper and his goddam charity!

The Frau professor sat up straight in her chair. She thought her husband was the kindest man in the world. She knew the efforts he had made to be received at this luncheon. Conscience had done this to him, morbid self-accusation, a German intellectual. But he was not asking for much, why shouldn't the *Excellenz* listen? But her husband went on talking anyway.

"You will be told that is all you can do. . . ." the professor looked down at his hands, knowing he should look at

Vortz instead . . . "but we are not ready to receive those gifts. An attitude of mind should go with them." Without some encouragement the professor was not going to last, Fingar saw with satisfaction. Vortz was staring angrily at his papers.

"In fact it would be better if you left us . . . to taste the bitter. . . ." Perhaps the representative doesn't hear him. That would be best, all in all. Fingar proposed a toast to the congressman, and the company arose. The professor got automatically to his feet.

"Those fruits, of course we feel them. There are little things we don't have," the professor went on saying . . . damn the man! Tupper, come over here, give the professor another drink. Have you finished your drink, Professor? Oh, you haven't. I'm sorry, please go on. "There are things we don't have. . . ." Frau Winternitz looked over to her husband. He was blinking. It hurt him to say anything. It hurt him so much. She knew he had to get it out.

"In a few years, we will have coffee in our cups again, we will buy foreign dresses and make cars . . . there are people who don't understand. You could make us understand."

Vortz at last looked over in Winternitz's direction. Fingar heaved a sigh of relief.

"Understand, Professor . . . I have a great deal of experience in these things. What you say is very interesting. People here have understood, and now there has been a spiritual regeneration. Yes, that's what I'd call it. A spiritual rebirth. I find the same thing everywhere. The will to live. We can't go and leave a vacuum here. . . ."

To think that he used to be a man, the Frau professor said to herself. When he came out of Berlin, they were all talking about him. He's still a young man. Talk. That's what he's good for. Talk. The country has gone to the dogs. He wants it to stay there. We will learn something from that. But if I want to eat two sausages instead of one, bread at that, I must take one of his. And he complains. He cannot work, his

hands are cold. The students have no respect, he complains. But he wants us to stay that way. We're going to learn from it.

Fingar called for another toast.

"This regeneration you speak of, *Excellenz*. . . ."

"To the distinguished Gentleman from I——"

The doorbell rang and the professor got up to answer. The Frau professor pulled him down.

"Sit down, haven't you got any pride?"

The Landrat, Metzinger, entered with Doblin and Frau Doblin, half Swedish on her mother's side. Vortz smelled success. Landrat Metzinger had the broad intellectual brow of the German official, deep-set blue eyes, a wealthy mouth, white lipped, very small ears, without any lobes, and thinning grey-black hair. Courtly in manner, grave, prudent, educated and determinedly ambitious. In a political vacuum, he was perfection. He was colourless, devoted to officialdom, and well stocked with plans. Intelligence and breeding he had, but he was shrewd to the point of cunning, stubborn, loyal, and dogmatic.

He came in with long masculine strides and a warm handshake. He greeted the professor and his wife with such warmth that she was insulted and the professor bewildered.

"Terrible thing, this bombing," was Vortz's opening gambit to the Landrat. "Seems senseless now. Harmless little town. . . ."

"It was the British," Metzinger said tactfully. The professor was about to interrupt. His glass shook slightly in his hand.

"*Excellenz*, have you heard the story of the bombing? It is an excellent story. Excellently ironical. . . ."

"It's not really a joke, Professor," Metzinger warned.

"No, not, not a joke. Of course not. But very ironical."

"I'm sure the representative's heard it," Fingar said, breaking into the circle and trying to draw Winternitz away. He beckoned that Harry should talk to him.

"Of course I was not here," broke in Doblin. A full colonel who had fought all the German campaigns from Poland to

the last battles on the Rhine, he was caught between a desire to claim his due of heroism and a fear that having been a colonel might prejudice his audience against him.

"Of course not, Colonel, you were in the glorious retreat from the East. . . ." Doblin bowed coldly to the professor. Metzinger soothed the troubled waters. The representative had on his thinking expression.

"It's really nothing," Metzinger said. "Some of the more brilliant minds that stayed here during the War, and who were devoted to the cause of the NSDAP—I was not a member myself—would listen every night to the radio for the message from the Chancellor Goebbels. Every night they heard other cities mentioned: Hamburg, praise; Darmstadt, praise; Halle, praise. The war effort . . . naturally they felt jealous. They too were doing their part. So they sent a petition, that had four thousand names on it, all the names of jewelers, and workmen in the various shops around town who made bomb-sights, periscopes, instruments, all sorts of delicate work . . . they sent the petition to Herr Goebbels that he should do something for the morale of these craft workers who were behind our glorious troops on the front, working in every home, in every room, in every cellar. They needed their morale boosted.

"To make a long story short, Herr Goebbels did come down, on the 20th of February. There were parades through the streets. . . ."

"They threw garlands at him," Winternitz interrupted. "One fell over his head and was meant to settle on his shoulders, but his shoulders were so thin it fell all the way down him. . . ."

"Yes, there was a great celebration, so I hear. Goebbels spoke to the entire nation. It was a great event:

"'We who belong to the great German nation,' he said, 'must not overlook the efforts of these devoted workers of Pforzheim, who have made their homes, their rooms, their attics and cellars into workshops for the Reich!'"

Metzinger looked abashed.

"That's the story the professor thinks is so funny. . . ." Vortz was not laughing. He was rubbing the bridge of his nose and listening to the rumbling in his stomach that told him he should drink no more until he had some solid food in him. The Landrat thought the representative had not understood.

"It seems the English had not known anything about Pforzheim until then, until they heard the broadcast. They did not even know anything was made here. Until that night. On the night of the 23rd, they made sure that there was not a home, not a room, not an attic or a cellar left to work in. That's what the professor finds funny."

"I didn't say funny," Winternitz insisted. "I said it was ironical."

41

AN INTERMINABLE lunch. The professor, Vortz reasoned, was a poor fish of a man to let himself be insulted quite so openly. But Metzinger was smart; he stayed aloof, a true picture of abstraction. Except to the representative, of course.

After lunch, after a dismal tour of the town . . . an argument over the privilege of transporting the congressman, Doblin winning with a visit to his factory; the congressman expressed the hope that Mr. Doblin would let him buy a few trinkets for the missus who liked souvenirs . . . Shattuck went to work for an hour while Vortz rested downstairs.

The representative loved such dilatory half-hours. Supine, a glass of sour mash in hand—he voted with the Solid South—the representative talked, Fingar listened, flattered by the palsy-walsy. The tennis game was in the offing, Shattuck had analysed his production ratios, Fingar had begun to be bored . . . Vortz talked on while he and Fingar were changing.

When they got down to the club, Shattuck and Harry had been three quarters of an hour on the court, volleying.

Vortz wore a pair of swimming trunks with a Hawaiian motif: leis, fish, coco-nut palms, red, yellow and green. Over this, a white business shirt with starched cuffs and a hunting cap of forest green. Fingar's shorts were from a local tailor. They were excellent silk.

"How'll we work this, Hal?" Vortz had dropped the formal "Major" at Fingar's request, but so far had not been rewarded with a reciprocation. The major was nervous, sweating freely before the game began, wiping his high bulky brow with a handkerchief.

"You play with Carey, I think. . . ." Fingar calculated rapidly. If Shattuck was about his speed, that made it 6-2, or 6-3 for them.

"Just get Shattuck to move," Vortz said. "If that boy would move. . . ." He disappeared into the latrines at the side of the clubhouse. The groundskeeper's daughters watched through the partition between the clubhouse and their kitchen. Fingar decided to follow the congressman in. He had an irrational fear that the lunch had disagreed with Vortz. The representative explained in great detail. It was his bladder.

They ran on to the court together and Fingar draped a towel over the net-post. Harry walked over to Vortz's side while the representative waddled back to the base-line. He was tall, but still waddled, feet spread out like a duck's. He tucked his shirt in and softly patted his buttocks. He noticed Harry watching.

"Washington parties and public life," he said as Fingar hit him the first ball. "Gut and rump." He missed the ball altogether.

In another man, Harry thought, it would have been another touch of irony, to invoke the capital's lucullan feasts here in Pforzheim.

"Good shot, Hal!" Vortz yelled at Fingar.

. The groundskeeper and his two spool-shaped daughters had

come out of the privacy of their apartments; they twisted their fingers in the wire netting, watching curiously. There was a fine yellow sun, but fallen behind the nearest hill. The court was edged with shadow.

The major hit his next ball more softly. It arched, floated, and only just touched the doubles corridor. Vortz sent it in Shattuck's direction. The lieutenant ignored it. He and Harry were volleying with each other.

"Run, boy, run!" the representative laughed paternally at Shattuck. Meanwhile the major had sent his third ball at Vortz's feet. Vortz missed it.

"I'm ready when you are!" he said. He turned to Harry. "You serve first."

"Do you want to serve, Major?" Harry asked. Fingar pretended not to hear.

"Serve them up," Vortz said. "I'll cover the net. If you can put it on Shattuck's backhand, I can kill it." He paddled up to the net.

"I'll try a couple of balls," Harry said. He served. It bounced high on Shattuck's backhand. Shattuck returned it lazily. At the middle of the net Vortz slammed it down the centre.

"Fifteen love!" Vortz moved to the other court. Harry took his second practice. "Other court boy, other court." He smiled. "Give me another serve like that and I'll put it in the major's mouth." Fingar retreated. Shattuck picked up Harry's ball and threw it back to him.

"That was a practice, sir. . . ."

"You ought to move more, Shattuck. You could have got that slam."

"Thirty love!" said the major, who was getting confused.

"Service!" Harry was ready to serve.

"You're doing fine, boy, just fine." Vortz encouraged.

"They were practice, sir. . . ."

Vortz turned around and looked dubious.

"We haven't got time for that, boy, serve 'em up!"

Shattuck was a better player than Harry, yet he sent lob

after lob to the congressman. Fingar nearly made good shots trying to make easy ones look hard. Harry and the Congressman won handily.

"Sixteen years in Congress, you know," Vortz said after the game. His sporty shorts were sweaty. "That's not good training. . . ."

Harry looked at Shattuck. Shattuck did not answer his smile.

"Goddam it, man . . . you take this game too seriously yourself," he said to Harry. There was something like anger in his voice.

42

A POKER game until late in the night, played with the two little bauble-bags Vortz had brought back from the A-C Fabrik, Doblin's empire. Slowly the bright blue stones replaced currency; they rolled across the table, dropped to the floor, even making Mrs. Tisch, who at a telephone call had come to provide the feminine touch, make most unfeminine lurchings under the major's horschair sofa in search of the elusive diamonds.

Harry stepped outside when it was nearly three. There were signs that winter encroached; by night some leaves were lemon yellow, the air, already cooler, smelled of raw potato, or had Harry carried the odour out with him from the congressman's last sour vodka belch, the belch that had just closed the evening, meaning I've had enough. Harry went back in. The representative was sprawled on the sofa. Fingar playfully extracted the second of the two bags and played with the gems, pulling the bag's drawstrings tight. He threw it to Shattuck.

"Here's your bean bag, Lieutenant."

Shattuck caught it. Vortz breathed deeply.

"Twinkle, twinkle, little jewel. . . ." Fingar lullabied.

"Make all my pleasures du-al," the major stumbled slightly, but seeing Vortz nearly asleep, he extracted another loose gem from his pocket.

"Very good, Major, very good. . . ." Vortz mumbled.

"Hoy, Major, Hal, whatever you are . . . put back my jewels. . . ."

Fingar took the bag away from Shattuck and put it down on the table, which was still covered with cards.

"There you are . . . sir. . . ." Fingar said belligerently.

"And pay up, Katey . . . pay up, you, Carey. . . ."

Vortz struggled to a sitting position.

Harry had lost too. He paid his losses and Mrs. Tisch hers. Shattuck had cleaned them all out. The lieutenant was in a strange close mood, and started, only then, to drink. But the party was over. He fingered the two velvet bags.

"A real prince. . . ." he said, slipping the diamonds into his jacket pocket. He looked at Vortz without hatred.

"Going to stay up, Licutenant?" Harry asked.

"I have to give them to him in the morning," Shattuck answered brusquely, "I might as well drink up his liquor."

They carried the congressman up the stairs, Harry and Shattuck, while the major chose to expire on the sofa. Tupper had long since gone to bed. Mrs. Tisch followed them up the stairs, and when they came down, stayed behind. But hers was a lost cause.

Shattuck wouldn't let Harry say a word against Vortz. He offered the congressman's bottle to Fingar, and together they were well on their way to finishing it when Harry left.

"You take it too seriously," Shattuck shouted after Harry.

"Three Cheers for Katerina Regina!" Shattuck bellowed.

"Three cheers for Katerina Regina! Hip, hip. . . ."

"Hurrray!"

"Hip, hip. . . ."

"Hurrray!"

"Hip, hip. . . ."

"Hurrray!"

RATHER THAN return directly to CIC, Harry took a brief walk by the tennis courts. It was past time to go to bed, and he was certainly in no frame of mind to sleep. The red entouscas on the courts was a dim yellow, the tapes a light white blue. The tapes suggested tracks in some enormous marshalling yard; the general yellow glow was that of klieg light through steam. How he had been indignant at small things: The captain with the cockatoo's head-dress and the flapping clip-board. The smell of schnapps, a lower class vodka in that home-distilled state. At Creeley, the ridiculous floating bauble of the cable car sailing overhead, Grace made a fool of, Bernhard. At Schwartz, at Vortz. The indignation was passing, or would he retain that capacity for indignation? Perhaps in a proper proportion, minus priggishness.

Lights were on downstairs in the house, and the curtains were not drawn. What was Porteous doing up at this hour? Talking with someone, Harry could see just the back of a man's head. He opened the front door; the office door was open.

"I was wondering when you'd get in," Porteous said.

In the office with Porteous was a man of about forty, with long blond hair combed straight back, a long, slightly curved nose, and a smile full of brilliant gold teeth, brighter than any Harry had ever seen.

"The game just broke up. . . ."

"This is Ali ben Imala," Porteous said. Imala stood up. The brightest Arab Harry had ever seen, very blond, very bright. It was the only word to describe him, or rather the effect he made in a room.

"How was the party?" Porteous asked. Harry thought of Mrs. Tisch, then of Porteous, then of how to answer.

"I lost more than I had. . . ."

The Arab shook Harry's hand. Harry felt a slight distaste; he was jaded for things glittering, and the Arab glittered.

"Ali knows something about Speyer. . . ."

"About Speyer. . . ."

Harry sat down. He thought he saw a smile on Porteous' face.

"Come off it, Larry . . . I can't take a joke tonight."

He half rose out of his chair.

"No kidding," Porteous said. "He's got a message from an old friend of yours. . . ."

Harry started to get up again.

"OK, OK," Porteous went on quickly. "Why so touchy? It's just the baron. . . ."

"Von Kreilsheim?"

"That's the boy . . . he wants someone to go see him."

"You go," Harry said curtly.

"No," Porteous shook his head. "You go."

"To hell with that, Larry."

"I'd better go," the Arab spoke his first word. Porteous nodded.

"You'll find a roast in the icebox, Ali. Help yourself."

"I've had a tough day," Harry said.

"You know the saying. . . ."

"Listen, Larry . . . the baron's a friend of Mrs. Tisch. Right?" Porteous nodded. "And I'm not wrong in saying that you are a friend of Mrs. Tisch?"

"And?"

And? And Larry? A nasty story. The coupling of a woman of fifty, and a man half that age. Gigolo and paramour were the only words that occurred to Harry, and he was too tired to use them. I won't say anything, Harry said to himself. Porteous is a friend, even if it's only because he has no other friends.

"And nothing, Larry, if you don't know. Vortz?" Harry knew he was going too quickly and too far. In fact there was no point in telling Porteous: he might not mind.

"Would you care to comment on that, Larry? Or on Colonel Schwartz? Or Fingar?"

"What do you mean, Vortz? That lousy slob."

"That lousy slob. . . ."

Porteous coloured.

"What the hell do you know about it? I hear Metzinger was riled as hell. . . ."

"Why . . . didn't he get anything?"

"Metzinger? Metzinger's as honest as they come, when it comes to something that can be proved. The man's a miracle of probity."

"All right," Harry said. "So I won't mention the congressman. I've had my belly full. It's the first time I had one haunch to haunch. But what about them all? I don't want any part of it. . . ."

"Anyway . . . you go. . . ."

"You're an unprincipled bastard, you know."

"Not unprincipled," Porteous said. "Just underprincipled."

"And they all tie in: Schwartz, the baron, Mrs. Tisch, you, Fingar. . . ."

"You're going, Harry."

"Speyer. . . ."

"Speyer too. But you're going."

"But I don't know what it's all about . . . I don't want to get mixed up in it."

Porteous was at the door, his finger playing on the light switch.

"You bastard," Harry said.

44

EARLY TO Stuttgart the next morning, Harry could not claim to have slept well, or easy. The day was not going to be hot. Thundershowers in the early hours had kept Harry awake, if his day with Vortz and his argument with Porteous had not. Now, at a quarter to eight, the rain had given way to a strong

wind from the east. Small fierce black clouds pushed rapidly towards France.

Imala had bursts of enthusiastic monosyllables, then, seeing Harry silent, long silences. They stopped for gas as they came on to the Autobahn. The snack bar was nearing completion. Harry hurried a lazy German mechanic.

"Come on, man, I want to get moving. . . ."

The German looked Harry over, astonished. Black Opel, an Arab with gold teeth, American accent. It was not like Harry's first days. His suit now looked like it had grown on him. His hair cut long, a grey scarf around his neck, he had assumed a disguise, and a great deal more.

Imala was urinating into the bushes behind the station.

"Woman trouble," Imala said on his return, as though he had just been thinking it.

"I thought you weren't talking?"

"Mister Larry got trouble with women. . . ."

"What's it to you, Ali?"

"Nothing, nothing. . . ." Imala seemed delighted at Harry's irritation. He smiled his golden smile. "You'll see, you can trust me."

If I trust anyone, Harry thought, it had better be me.

"You've seen him, Mister Harry . . . I think the Herr Baron will be happy to do business with you," Imala said. "But he is proud."

Why would he be happy to do business with me? Harry asked himself. The man has spent fifteen years making himself an enigma. High in councils of state, a position not due to accident, or neutral qualities. What was the baron to do with all he had learned? What was he now? Brave enough to escape Allied capture in Italy, pure enough to escape trial at Nürnberg, rich enough to live as he pleased, the baron, making use of what part of his great gifts now?

Some child's play, probably, for the sin of being German; the sin that made the two of them, the baron and Harry, at least for the time being, equal.

Stuttgart at half past nine. Vogeldorf was in the extreme southern corner of the French Zone, near Waldkirch, not far from Lake Constanx. Harry told the Motor Pool mechanic to check the lights.

Imala was more cheerful when they started on their way to Tübingen. He asked Harry to let him drive, which Harry refused. He fiddled with the windshield, which opened out; with the cigarette lighter that didn't work; with the glove compartment, where he found an old leather glove. He put the glove on his right hand and took a .38 out of his overcoat pocket.

"What in Christ's name are you doing with that?" Harry asked. Imala took it ceremoniously by the barrel and laid it in the glove compartment.

"Mister Larry gave it to me."

"I hope it's not loaded. . . ."

Imala was silent until they were well out of the city. Then, when they were in a thickly wooded section, he removed the revolver from the pocket and fired it, without aiming, out of the window.

"It's loaded," he grinned.

"Goddam it, Ali, put the thing away. . . ."

Imala fired again, and then reached into his pocket.

"See?" He held up a small box of .38 bullets. Harry had visions of Imala shooting at trees all the way to Vogeldorf. It made him jittery.

"Put it away, Ali. . . ."

"Mister Larry . . . he's got woman trouble too," Imala said, shooting a third time, this time at a notice on a telegraph pole. "You can trust me. . . ." He squeezed the trigger again.

Harry tried to forget about Imala by concentrating on the baron, but his mind wandered. The sky changed dramatically. They were in hills and pine. The knapsack crowd had trudged through here in the merry pre-war days, stuffed with guide-books and sausage, stopping for wine, singing.

The Arab fired the last of his six shots. The shot infuriated Harry, a crazy Arab schoolboy firing at nothing.

"You fire just one more shot, Ali, and I swear I'll fire the goddam thing right through you."

The Arab grinned and put the gun back in the glove compartment. He toyed with the cap on the gearshift.

"Leave it alone, Ali, goddam it."

Harry was working himself into a rage.

"Let me drive," Imala said to Harry. "You sit back and think."

It happened to suit Harry. He watched the landscape with the intensity of a man who wants to remember. Peaceful, prosperous landscapes: green, brown, darker green, grey-green. Imala drove slowly and showily.

They were at the French Zone barracks in a quarter of an hour. The tricolour flew over a tarpaper shack just like the one at the bridge. Two trucks were drawn up on the French side of the barrier. Restless for war, another consignment for Foreign Legion recruitment. They had to be smuggled across the border. What had Creeley said: conquest was a matter of daily life? These just couldn't wait.

They were passed, and started south. The hills continued, and forest. Villages stood in their way, white or grey, with peeling wooden steeples, pitched roofs, and old unromantic names, like Michelsgrab, Oettingheim, Billigsdorf, Jagd. They passed the villages, and beyond the villages the hills continued, and the forest.

Imala spat out of the window.

"Bah, I would not live here. I hate pretty villages."

"How far to go?"

"If I drive, we will be there for dinner."

Harry leaned back and tried to get some sleep.

THEY REACHED Vogeldorf a half-hour after sunset. The skies had cleared; a pale bluish pink reached the deeper blue to the east. Behind the blue was black. Behind the black, blacker still, lozenge-shaped, the sky, and caught between broken bits of hills. The new tin steeple of the church rose sharply before them, with its weathervane and louvred shutters, where a little coarse yellow light was trapped as the village slowly went dark. Shutters closed and the pale lights did not penetrate to the main road. A glimmer under some rough-hewn doors, a lantern stalking in an inner court.

Imala stopped the car in front of the church.

"The baron is up there," Ali said, pointing to a rutted dirt road along the side of the church. The road wound across a field of hay and into the dark hills. He turned on the headlights and the beams caught a chicken straying from its fence. The chicken scurried back, frightened. Harry thought of the lieutenant at Marburg. A dog barked.

Imala drove slowly; the road had a high ridge in the middle and steep banks on either side. There was not a sound except for their motor. Neither Harry nor Imala spoke. The air had turned chill, and Harry wound his window up; then, wanting to see better, wound it down again. The hay on the banks brushed the fenders of the car, making a soft whisking sound.

They came to a low stone wall, and a hinged iron gate. open. A hundred yards further, another, with the gate shut. Ali got out and pushed the gate open; the iron spikes on the bottom scraped on the gravel. Then they were in a clearing hemmed in by tall woods, carefully planted. The moon was rising behind them. More box and stone; once a formal garden. Statues had long shadows, symmetrical like the woods. A row of trimmed yew, a square house with a round dome like an observatory, but very small, the garden kiosk. Then several outbuildings, one after another, and the road suddenly

improved and turned sharply right. They came to a dead end against a miniature wood: dwarfed trees, a pond, a Japanese bridge.

Imala had already opened his door. Harry got out and took his coat out after him. It was only fifty miles due south to the Alps. That wind must blow down from them, Harry thought. It blows from Oberammergau. They both stood still. It was to listen, but the only sound was that of their own breathing.

"I'll show you the way," Imala said, suddenly curt, turning back down the drive.

The next to the last room before the baron's study was a billiard room. The butler's precise, measured steps sounded ahead of them on the parquet. The billiard room was hung with prints of North American Indians. On the wall was a rack of cues, looking like weapons.

The butler knocked on the study door, sternly. The baron opened the door to them. They had apparently interrupted a private conversation. There was another man in the room with the baron. He was half turned round in a deep leather chair by the fire. He had bristly white hair and an almost intolerably straight back. .

"My companion in exile. . . ." Von Kreilsheim made a negligent gesture with his hand. "General von B——, Mister Benton."

The butler disappeared. The two men had been sitting in front of a wood fire. The rest of the room was in darkness. The baron looked at Imala, but did not introduce him to his guest.

"Have you eaten?" von Kreilsheim asked.

"Thank you," Harry bowed slightly.

"Then sit down please. You'll have a scotch with us?"

"If I may. . . ."

"Yes, it must be very cold outside," the general said.

"You saw how Tina didn't want to go out."

The baron explained. "Tina is my dog, Mr. Benton. The cold air disgusts her. If we let her stay here, she creeps up bit by bit, until she is right in the fire."

The general laughed crisply while von Kreilsheim poured Harry's drink. Harry saw the baron signal to Imala, and the Arab left the room without a word.

"I'm sorry," the baron said before handing Harry his drink, "I forgot you might want to wash." He pulled a bell cord, and Harry heard the bell tinkle in another, distant, part of the house.

All the servants seemed to be cast from the same military mould. Harry followed a footman out through a great hall hung with hunting trophies. Probably all the servants were, if these two were . . . a small army.

When Harry had washed, he tried to dismiss the footman and find his own way back to the baron's study, but the servant stayed with him, marching rigorously behind.

The baron had drawn up another leather chair, and there were now three chairs in front of the fire.

General von B. Of course German generals' names were notoriously similar. But hardly a general from the Wehrmacht was free to roam the country. Landsberg, Nürnberg, safely interned . . . those that had not been hung, shot, or had not crushed poison capsules against their cheeks. Mister "Benton". That was easy. The baron was an old hand at the pseudonymous life. He and General von B. had many possible memories in common, but which brought them together here? Harry could hardly tell. The baron spoke apart, without rue or self-interest, perhaps as a student of the political heart, having seen perfidies, conquests, defeats, and defeats within defeats. An adventurer might speak the way von Kreilsheim did, an adventurer with no stake in life except his own interest. But there was now no Sherifian war, no Abyssinia to conquer; there was no room for mortification of the flesh, or buckling of the spirit. The contrast between the two men was as obvious as the resemblance. The baron

bore the stamp of that adventurer, its associations of disloyalty, as much as the general bore the unmistakable signs of devotion. Von Kreilsheim was free, free to his own conscience, conclusions and motives, as no man Harry had seen in Germany was free. He remained inconspicuous himself . . . but was it by choice? Had he once been more ambitious?

Harry could not tell from listening to either of them. They were hidden in the heart of the last untouched Germany, in the heart of a country that never ceased to be at war, and they spoke in abstract terms.

"You know I am writing a history for your government," the baron said, seeing Harry plunging into silence. "That's why they set me loose, if that's what you wonder about, now that you've had time to look into all my background. . . . It's an interesting period, the last fifteen years. I see no other quite like it. . . ."

"I'm sure you are learning valuable lessons," General von B. interrupted. He spoke a dry, precise English.

"We had all learned the same lesson, in the same place, long before we started, if you remember. . . ."

"Not you, Gunther . . . you were too young. I remember, don't you worry."

"And you were too old?" The baron added laughingly.

"No," the general said. "I didn't care for the lesson. I did not rebel against the two plus two equals four of history, but everything seemed possible to me. . . ."

"I would say it was all ridiculous from the start. The men were wrong. They were men. That was the undoing."

General von B. murmured words to the effect that the baron was a fatalist. A luxury, he called it. The spark of an old fire burned in his eyes.

"Fate? I thought you said everything was possible?"

"And so it is . . . but you have no desire. Nothing moves in you. . . ."

The discussion bored Harry. He had a feeling that it could, and did, go on for weeks, or months. It was a discussion by

two men who had lived through an experience together that meant everything to them, by which they must gauge everything that lay around or before them. Harry was almost calculatingly rude, mostly out of inadequacy.

"If there is nothing you desire, Herr Baron, surely there is something you are willing to give us. . . ?"

The fire crackled. The general hastily threw another log on the fire.

"If I give you anything, Mister Benton, it is only to show that *you* have nothing worth desiring. . . ."

Von Kreilsheim half stood up, and then as though annoyed by this display of physical reaction, he went to the fire and added a log to the general's.

"You are very sure," Harry said, fighting back the flush on his cheeks, flush of anger and flush of shame.

"You are quite wrong, Mister Benton. "*Nothing* is very sure. I am interested in you, that is perhaps all. . . ."

Harry felt he had to get the whole business out of his system.

"And Colonel Schwartz?"

Von Kreilsheim didn't even blink. He stood facing Harry with his back to the fire. The general had settled back in his chair.

"You are wrong there too," von Kreilsheim said. "But then unhappily, or perhaps happily for you . . . you were not in possession of all the facts, and bringing you along was a mistake. I confide too much perhaps; so you feel free to insult. In this case I will tell you that it was necessary for me to meet Colonel Schwartz in a manner that could not be viewed but as prejudicial to your interests, that is American interests, and a *triomphe* for the French. It is not of much interest to me now, whether you believe me . . . but there were no millions of francs, and you appear very much a fool. Which you could have avoided by staying in your place."

Of course the baron was telling the truth. Harry knew he

was. It had been too much pleasure merely to despise the colonels, and perhaps they were stupid. But they were not half as stupid as he had been. A wave of self-disgust and frustration made Harry ask the baron a last question.

"What would you have done?"

Von Kreilsheim was grave. His answer had a quality of hopelessness in it that arrested both Harry's and the general's attention.

"I would have said that Wildbad . . . for you . . . or for us . . . or Germany . . . I would have said it was neither the time nor the place for moral indignation. . . ."

Yes, yes, of course. Mieke said that too. Porteous said it. Shattuck said it. But *why*? Why was this so? You tell me, Herr Baron, Harry said to himself, you tell me *why* we should withdraw our moral indignation?

46

ON HIS way back, Harry stopped in Esslingen. The Frauenkirche spire was a very tall pink man lying on the straw of the vineyards. There were no memories there for him; it had become just a stopping-off place. Harry was too tired, body and soul, to summon a single ghost from the past. He felt he had changed too much, and suddenly, reflecting on that, he found he could not even remember how he had been when he arrived. Because he remembered an inane conversation with Captain Gollffing (and remembered that he had been incensed about the Reverend Goodenough), Harry went up to Personnel. Gollffing was still at his desk, but he barely remembered Harry. Ah, yes, Pforzheim. A new man was coming out there he said. Harry kidded with him. Did Gollffing realise what a new man would be like in a tight community of three men?

Gollffing had his comfort ready. He gave it to Harry:

"They're probably going to close all the small offices like Pforzheim. Haven't got the personnel any more. . . . You'll move into barracks probably."

Take us out of the secrecy and anonymity of our German lives? Harry thought. What are we without these?

"That's it," said Gollffing, short as ever. "An occupying army. That's what you are."

Next thing you know, it'll be uniforms.

"Uniforms. That's next. You guys bitch so much. What else were you when you came?"

"I didn't ask to be made into what I am," Harry answered, "But now we're merged into it. You can't take it away all at once. But I didn't ask for it."

"You're in it. Up to here." Gollffing slit his throat with the side of his hand.

It won't be easy.

"Some people don't have the right attitude any more," Gollffing said.

It was the first time Harry thought seriously of leaving. Up to then Germany had seemed an infinite vista. He would stay there forever, and get in deeper and deeper. The country would all catch up to him, the various parts of himself he had left in the various parts of the country. . . . Mieke, Creeley, the baron, Porteous, Levine, Mrs. Tisch. As he thought, Harry knew that even before talking to Gollffing his mind had been made up. The next journey was the journey home.

Still in the same mood, only having begun to drink, Harry found himself in Stuttgart. Once, by accident, in mid-afternoon, he passed the *Stars and Stripes* office. He ducked guiltily around the building and counted his money. This was the Harry Carey of Marburg and Bad Homburg! As the afternoon wore on, his self-disgust grew more desperate. He suddenly remembered the Greek's hangouts from an old MOIC. The Bunker Hotel was one of them. He walked past it several times: the neatly swept rubble, the rubber doormat, the steel doors, and the stairs to the below-the-ruins. It was a

ridiculous commentary on the world upstairs. It was all well kept down there, mopped, dusted, spotless.

Harry suddenly wondered: why were they chasing the Greek? Surely the thing they were really after was all around them and they couldn't even catch up to it.

47

HARRY DROVE back to Pforzheim long after midnight, slightly sobered and ready to pack, as though he were leaving the next day. He woke up late and came down to breakfast while Waxman and the barber were in their morning conference in the bathroom. In the dining room Mrs. Tisch sat at the head of the table, buttering Porteous' toast. Harry went back upstairs.

Waxman's hair was black and purple against the light from behind him. The barber was scraping the thick hair off his throat.

"Welcome home," Waxman said as Harry reached the head of the stairs. Harry jerked a finger over his shoulder in answer to Waxman and Waxman nodded.

"She's just moved in. . . ."

"It just occurs to me," Harry said, moving down the stairs again. "I don't care. . . ."

"Maturity, Harry? Or just fed up?" Waxman jumped. "Goddam it Fritz, watch what you're doing. You've been away all week," Waxman glowered at the barber, speaking out of the side of his mouth to Harry. "Fritz and I just got the bathroom. . . ."

"She wants to have me cut her hair. . . ." Fritz said. Waxman ignored him.

"You watch what you're doing. Last night she wanted to bring me a glass of milk before I went to sleep."

"I told you, I don't care," Harry said again.

When he walked into the dining room for the second time, they both looked away. Her two dachshunds lolled in the hall. She was pampered and chic everywhere, just the same in Wildbad or Pforzheim, intact in her own way, living out what was either a very brave lie or a very cowardly truth. Neither she nor Porteous made any gesture of invitation, and Harry went upstairs for the second time.

Larry had lost his old glitter. What would Grace Stockley have said about him today? If he had lost the golden touch, Harry could lose his loyalty. They had come and gone together.

If his loyalty was lost, how deeply Harry hated Porteous. It was a hatred, fierce, uncharitable, and fiercely moral.

For a week after Harry's return from the south Porteous was snappish. Not only was the old twinkle gone, but it had been replaced by a seedy sympathetic manner. He walked around the CIC house in a cloud of friendly humility, as though to say: "I have always been like this." If anyone pointed out that the humility was brand new, or even recognised it as humility, that was where the snappishness entered. The household was restless. That was the way with change. Germany was an odd sort of vacuum; there was no resistance to change. What happens slowly in a man's life happened fast in Germany. Porteous, a gilt-edged creature, a quondam baker from Philadelphia, ringed in with heavy gold jewelry, collapsed all of a sudden.

On a Friday afternoon the Pforzheim office got a call that Porteous was to be in Karlsruhe, bag and baggage, by Sunday morning. At that time Waxman was to drive him in, and at the same time fetch out the new Officer-in-Charge for Field Office, Pforzheim. This was a temporary change, pending final disposition of Pforzheim's status. As of now, they were all on temporary orders.

So Porteous packed, with a look of unruffled dignity, making overtures of friendship to the last. He was out of the house Friday evening at eight thirty. Mrs. Tisch picked him

up in her trim black Opel and drove him off presumably to her apartment in Pforzheim, because the next day he was back with her, for a lunch, *à part*, in the CIC dining room.

It happened so quickly that none of them understood that Porteous' stay was truly over. No one was sorry, except George Hartman, to whom Porteous left a good part of his excess belongings. Harry still could not understand that George considered all men equal. He himself was only sorry for Mrs. Tisch. She was not being taken, at least in the usual sense of the word. She stayed behind with Pforzheim, the smell, the cold, her two dachshunds and the little American flags from the tea-table. The farewell had a strained atmosphere of not quite finality. At least on her part.

She still had Waxman and Harry as friends, or so she said.

"Pforzheim won't be the same without you," Waxman said as his good-bye, with more truth than charity.

For the first time since Garmisch, Harry shook Porteous' hand. The ring was still on his finger. Harry could feel it. Porteous had a strong handshake. In a few months Harry would be moving along too. He would shake someone else's hand, and they would probably never see each other again.

48

IMALA TURNED up on Sunday morning, the first day of Porteous' departure. He wanted a job, he said. Any job. Porteous had promised him one. Harry was alone in the house. It was not the Sunday for smiles. Imala's gold seemed to have gone with Larry's glitter.

"Did you sell your teeth?" Harry asked.

Imala did not smile.

"Mister Larry said. . . ."

"Porteous is gone," Harry had to repeat it to the Arab several times.

"He is not coming back?"

"Not coming back," Harry nodded.

"You are now in charge?"

"Now . . . yes."

"But someone is coming. . . ."

"That's right."

"You don't know who it is?"

"I wouldn't tell you anyway, Ali. . . ."

"I can stay, though?"

Harry studied the tall blond man before him. How old was Ali? Forty? Less? A blond Arab! What did the man want? Why was he there? to remind Harry of Vogelsdorf, the baron and his goddam General von B.—of all those facets of Germany that Harry now knew he could never grasp?

"You wouldn't be making fun of me, would you Ali?"

Imala took an apple off Porteous' old desk and started methodically destroying it.

"I haven't had any breakfast. . . ." he explained.

"Who the hell *are* you?" Harry asked.

Imala was nervous. The big man in him seemed to shrink.

Perhaps, like many people in Germany, he was nameless. Germany didn't require any names. It was a paper country. One man's Ali was another man's Thieck, which was the name Imala had given at the French Zone border. And just as much, one man's Harry was another man's Benton, or Bernhard, or Dargelin, or Benninghof, all pseudonymns picked at random and used in the same way. Now, if the CIC was going to be put into uniforms, that was another matter . . . then one man's Carey would be another man's Carey.

As though sensing the confusion in Harry's mind, the Arab did not answer.

"Ali, I've got a tie for you," Harry said suddenly, remembering a parting gift from Vortz. "Come with me." It was draped over the mirror props on Harry's dresser. Imala was delighted. He patted the tie flat on his chest, ran his heavy hand down the silk.

"That was given me by President Truman," Harry said. "I want you to remember that. You write him and thank him."

"Have you got anything for the baron?" Imala asked.

"What should I have?"

"Anything."

"What did he say after I left, Ali?"

"Nothing. He and the general stayed up all night. I think you were more clever than the baron. . . ."

Harry started downstairs with disgust.

"He didn't tell you to say anything to me?"

"He said to tell you he was sorry you didn't like Oberammergau."

Harry laughed.

"What did he expect?"

"And to ask you if you had anything for him?"

49

AFTER PORTEOUS' disappearance came a rush of scabrous stories that gave, better than any departures, the image of a sudden dissolution: stories from Gerda, from Hans the cook, Waxman, even from George Hartman, who rarely spoke evil of anyone. Pforzheim without Porteous was not at all the same place, and within two or three days Harry, Waxman, Halliday, George—all were conscious of it. Some of the weight of the ruined city was gone, and it was as though the weight had been taken off them individually: they were restless and resentful; they bickered over nothings, and all their conversation turned round Porteous, as though the sergeant had always been a mystery to them, and his sudden departure had made a revelation necessary.

After Imala's departure, Fingar paid a Sunday morning visit. The major, like all of them, had dark hints; he sniffed about the house and in the office, asking obscure questions

about Porteous. Porteous had been dethroned, he said, for his connections with "that woman".

"I thought she was a friend of yours," Waxman said insolently.

"I thought so too . . . but you know," Fingar said, suddenly familiar. "She had this way of not letting you know where you stood . . . you know too, I guess, that Metzinger's behind Porteous leaving. . . ?" The major moved his blood-shot eyes rapidly from Harry to Waxman and back again.

"The Landrat gets around," Waxman intoned, mimicking Metzinger's portentous manner. "Sure you aren't in one of his reports, Major . . . for playing poker?"

"I had my fun long ago . . . before Porteous ever got here. Did you know I'd been here nearly thirty months?"

Why the confidences, Major? Harry asked himself. Is the wind blowing your way too?

"She was kind of underfed then; but she always knew how to make the best of what she had."

"Underfed? I thought she made out all right?" Waxman asked.

"I suppose you did. But you can be underfed and still make out OK. . . ."

"She's got money. . . ."

Fingar lowered his voice, as though Porteous might still be in the house.

"How about it? Did he say he was going to marry her?"

"Who? Larry?"

Fingar nodded. He joined the fingers of both hands under his nose, like an arch.

"I hear that she gave him all her money. . . ."

"She wants to get out, that's all. . . ."

"Who doesn't," Harry added.

"I take it he didn't tell you," Fingar said with annoyance, "You weren't in his confidence. . . ."

"This was no place for secrets. . . ." Waxman said, also losing his good humour. Harry tried to change the subject.

"You can tell us something, Major," Harry asked. "Who's coming?"

Fingar looked surprised.

"You don't know?"

"It happened kind of quick."

"I don't know myself," Fingar answered cheerfully. "All I hear is that you'll be closing up shop in a while."

"I hear that too. I hear we're all going to close up shop." Waxman baited the major.

"How's that?"

"We're going to give Deutschland back to the Krauts."

The major laughed.

The question of Porteous' replacement was settled much sooner than they expected. Fingar had not quite made his exit when the replacement arrived, Porter driving. But something was wrong and that they all saw right away. A jeep filled with baggage, a trailer behind it, that was all right: some travelled light, some travelled heavy. But corruption's self-appointed reporter, Gargallo's other half, Porter, jumping out of a jeep, out of anything, standing at attention . . . Harry, Waxman and Fingar all looked out through the half-open front door.

Fingar now showed no inclination to leave, so they all clustered expectantly in the doorway. Porter scurried up the garden path, balancing two heavy Val-Paks. Two Val-Paks, heavy Val-Paks that Harry had never forgotten.

"Christ!" Harry said, ducking back into the house. Half by instinct Fingar followed him. He and Harry stood facing each other uncertainly. Then Fingar started his exit. As naturally as possible, and not too quickly.

The door flew open in his face and Porter stood framed in the doorway.

"Tenshun!" he shouted. Harry and Waxman started to laugh, then something in Porter's look stopped them. They shuffled limply to attention while Fingar stepped aside, aggrieved.

"What the hell?" he said.

Creeley stepped into the hall, self-collected, impeccably groomed in parade pinks and brightly-polished sunglasses. Waxman saluted, and feeling foolish, Harry followed suit.

There were no introductions. Creeley let Waxman and Harry stand easy while he exchanged the formulae of politeness with Fingar. Then a startled Hans appeared from the kitchen, and he and Waxman hurried out to complete the unloading of the jeep. Harry stood uncertainly in the hall until Creeley dismissed him with a curt nod; then he went out to join the other two.

50

"I TELL you," Waxman said later that evening, "I felt a cold wind blowing us all away, and I said to myself 'my boy, it's time you got to be thinking about home'. Then I remembered that I was in for two more years, two whole years to go, and I said 'Look what my family got me into!' Then I took another look at your friend the captain just before dinner, when he was washing those fatty little hands of his, and I said 'I'd better smarten up or some dope like that'll get the better of me. . . .' Anyway, small hands are dishonest, neat hands, polished hands, and men who wear rings. . . ."

That seemed to be the way they all felt. That entrance of Creeley's! None of them could quite get over it. The three of them could hardly laugh it out of their systems. While they were laughing, Harry remembered Porteous and Creeley laughing at Garmisch, and told the other two, and from that followed a detailed study of Creeley, Porteous' friendship with him, all the incidents Harry could remember. But as he spoke, he noticed the eyes of Waxman and Halliday even more intent upon him, and a peculiar atmosphere of tension in the room; so Harry began listening to himself as he told

Creeley's story. By degrees the story seemed not only peculiar, mysterious—for it had always seemed that—but also rather terrible.

Whatever Harry had told them about the captain, Creeley seemed to take pleasure in deliberately contradicting throughout that September, when the air hung motionless over Pforzheim and the rubble reflected wave after wave of heat, a rebirth of the original fire. He contradicted what Harry had said and contradicted himself too, sensing the exhausted nerves with which he had to deal, the tempers that suddenly bit into somnolent afternoons. All this was the work of the heat and the work of the interim in which they lived, for no one knew how long they would be there, or what they were supposed to be accomplishing. So even by the nature of their lives, the first six weeks of Creeley's reign were undecided, temporising, and therefore harrowing.

Of course he was still in many ways the same man that Harry had known at Garmisch and Oberammergau, still bloodless in feature and hand, and whip-bitter, still twisting a cigarillo between his lips, still fervid and urgent in speech. But the freakish and the tantrum had swollen in him; they would grow out of an agony of mind to which they were all witnesses. Yet Creeley liked to insist that it was otherwise, thus making their arbitrary character even more conspicuous. He was afraid of decisions, was he? Then he would make them, make them by the hundred. Their lives became a succession of tiny handwritten slips with summary directives: Carey to investigate the failure of BD in Bretton to deliver monthly Progress Reports, Hartman to turn in all unaccounted-for supplies. It was an illusion of decision, postponing the major decisions; the captain concealed the important under the absurd.

After a few weeks, Harry began to feel that same alternation of power and weakness in the captain that he had felt twice before, once in Oberammergau and once on top of the

Zugspitze. On the one hand Creeley's arrogance redoubled; on the other, he began to display an inexhaustible desire to be with and talk to his subordinates. Conversations and cross-examinations began at all hours, and would sometimes last half the day. At other times, as though realising his weakness, Creeley would curb his impulse by walking out in the middle of a lunch, or by quitting a meeting that he had called, or by refusing to answer even a simple question. Did Pforzheim have a past? Had things been done in one way and not in another? This sort of question was always on his lips. He was terrified of the routine before his arrival, of dates that had to be met, of supplies that had to be fetched from a specific place. But at the same time, if the routine had existed, then not one of Porteous' habits would he revoke. Meals, shaves, reports, conferences, informants, bribes . . . all this must go on just as before.

At the end of the month, fed by a nightmare that Creeley constantly denied to himself, the nightmare that Harry, Waxman and the rest of his underlings saw through him . . . there was hysteria. Orders, beginnings, countermands and closed files multiplied.

But a mystery remained, the essential mystery that really worried them, and that was why Creeley had come to Pforzheim at all. The town did not need a captain to command a three-man CIC detachment, and it also seemed ridiculous that when Porteous was removed, a close friend should replace him. The answer was several weeks in coming, but it was finally relayed to them by Gargallo who, one evening, drove out to Pforzheim in Creeley's absence and told them the astonishing story that the captain had not only asked for the job, but had pleaded for it. Had, in fact, made a special trip to the 970th CIC Detachment Headquarters in Bad Homburg, where he had a friend in Personnel, to get himself transferred to Pforzheim.

It was Gargallo himself, when he had finished relating this, who lifted his red bald head and looked at Harry. Waxman

and Halliday, and George, who had come for dinner that night, followed suit.

Harry's not answering that look of Gargallo's was the real beginning of the end at Pforzheim, because after that, regardless of what the other three said, there was no longer any real unity in the office. Halliday remembered Harry's arrival and the way Harry had been loyal to Porteous; Waxman added that Harry had seen Mrs. Tisch in Wildbad when accompanying the two colonels; Gargallo had heard of Harry's tennis game with Vortz and Fingar . . . there were too many unanswered questions. Of course, all Harry had to do was to answer those questions for himself, and unity would have returned, but he found to his horror that he could not, and could not because once again he felt his sentiments wavering, for in the first week of October his hatred of Creeley suddenly turned into a form of pity, for no reason that Harry could understand, and with no conscious prodding on his part. The captain seemed so afraid of not being at the centre. Not of their attention . . . he felt that, and they lived on nothing else . . . but at the centre of life, of Germany, of desire. And Harry could remember this feeling in himself, and remember what the captain had said about it in Garmisch. They had been words, after all, that had explained a great deal to Harry. Then too, the captain seemed to have no friends, never went to Karlsruhe, or even out at all, except sometimes, late at night, by jeep, by himself. And thus, for a brief period, Harry found himself thinking with Creeley, and occasionally staying up late at night with him, downstairs, talking endlessly about the country and the people, and their own roles in this strange relationship. But even then, the captain would often turn suddenly against Harry, malevolently sure of himself, dismissing Harry and all unspoken offers of friendship. He would face the world on his own terms, he said; he knew what he was doing. And these terms on which he faced the world, his own attitudes, slowly developed into the be-all and end-all of his stay at Pforzheim. He was the

ruler of a mythical kingdom within a kingdom, and he proposed to make the world submit to him. That was when Harry backed away, slightly aggrieved, but more puzzled, wondering how a man of Creeley's intelligence could fail to understand that his terms were the one thing that no one was really likely to grant him.

On the last day of October, as though nature were conspiring with the break-up of their intimacy, and Harry's connection with the world in which he had been living for nine months, a savage autumn wind struck the stumps in the punchbowl: the summer's dust got sucked angrily away, scudding at foot-level along the paths in the maze. On the burial plots (*Hier ruhen Herm. Heckle u. Frau g. Mayer Get.* 23.2.45) poked into insecure flowers of brick and caparisoned with wire umbrella frames twisted into wreaths, the flimsy wooden crosses toppled, surviving two winters but not the third. Chimneys cracked, seamed and cemented, crumbled; lintels and door-jambs, iron bedsteads, swaying lamp-posts . . . these alone stood up when all movement, pedestrians, bicycles, amputee's tricycles, coal-cars . . . when all movement leaned into the wind.

Below the CIC house, in all the round valley occupied by its hills, there was not a tree, so not a leaf fell.

51

THAT FOOLISH last fling, Pforzheim's Hallowe'en Party for Mrs. Tisch, originated in sentiment. Harry and his two friends decided one evening over huge glasses of pink champagne at the Karlsruhe Officers' Club that, as life was changing so rapidly around them, and their days in Germany were clearly numbered, some attempt should be made to halt the unreasoning rush of events. They found after an hour of sentimental conversation, interrupted several times by Gargallo,

who had attached himself to them (so he said) out of sympathy for their plight, that the age of Porteous had truly been the Golden Age. It had only taken a terse Army order to the effect that Field Office, Pforzheim, was to be closed on or about November 15 to make them realise this. Then, in ever-growing sharpness, each remembered some particular pleasure, or some freedom previously enjoyed, now mourned.

"Why don't we have a party?" Harry asked.

"What kind of party?" Halliday asked, staring intently at his glass.

"A going-away party, of course," Waxman put in.

"I don't want a going-away party," Harry said. "I want a welcome party. . . ."

"You had that," Halliday said.

"I did?"

"The Fourth of July. . . ."

"That's what we want. A party to bring it all back."

"Just like we were arriving," Waxman added.

"A burial party. We bury all the Krauts who come," Halliday suggested.

"No, no," Waxman said in a serious reasonable tone, "we bury the Kraut *in* us. Not the Kraut around us."

Harry sat down.

"Of course we'd have to invite Mrs. T."

"Why not?" Waxman asked, giving tangible expression to a shift in feeling that had been apparent to all of them: that Mrs. Tisch was less to be blamed for her actions than to be pitied. Larry Porteous had become the villain of the piece; they spoke of her as one of Larry's "suckers", and cited others, real or imaginary. As corroboration of this view they pointed to her behaviour since his absence. Was she offensive now, poor woman? How had Porteous enslaved her, and what had he taken from her? These were the questions asked.

It was clear she was not half so rich. There were rumours that she had been forced to sell her house in Wildbad, and that the two little rooms by the RR station in which she

lived when in Pforzheim were her only home. Certainly she no longer led as gay a life. Though she had not come to the CIC house since Porteous' departure, they were not in ignorance of her movements. These, on Creeley's orders, for he considered any friend of Porteous dangerous, were watched by Harry. And her movements were simple. Down from those sparsely furnished rooms twice a day to the Post Office where there was rarely a letter for her. Once a week she drove to Stuttgart or to Wildbad in her Opel, apparently the mere remains of her fortune. The rest, it was presumed, Porteous had filched. She appeared to them now in the guise of a woman resigned to life, devoted to waiting, probably, they all thought, for word of Larry.

52

HARRY'S INVITATION to Mieke was far more spontaneous and ultimately a great deal more absurd. Since Oberwald they had not seen each other, but not seeing each other meant something different for each of them. Harry had succeeded in not thinking about her, Mieke only in thinking of him more. In inviting her, Harry was not thinking of her, but of the kind of farewell he should make, and if he was clearing out, this was the way he wished to exit: they would have a good time, drink too much perhaps, and celebrate his departure; he would be in all this like a soldier going home, which was about what he was, a young man at the end of a cause, with the sense of mission, which he and Mieke had shared, over; past pleasures would be forgotten, no demands made; all were to understand that it was over, and that they had had a good time while it lasted.

This fantasy went so far in Harry's mind that he urged the others to do likewise: Halliday was to invite his communist girl friend, Irma, who certainly would have been no friend of

the Indiana Hallidays; George Hartman was to come with his wife Gerda; Fingar, Tupper . . . Tupper would be the only man without a woman . . . ; Gargallo had accepted a telephoned invitation and said he was bringing Magda, the Greek's friend; Waxman was to invite a friend of the family from the Boden See, a distant cousin, all of whose relatives, Waxman's Tcherman family, as he pitilessly called it, had been gassed out of the cheese business; Creeley led a celibate life but he promised to squire Mrs. Tisch . . . so why shouldn't Mieke come?

53

HALLOWE'EN WAS suddenly that cold day and an even colder night; this after the promise, on the 30th, of a spell of bright sunny days, a respite before winter. This was the way they all understood it, too, as sudden, and unpleasant, that grey wind and quick heaping of clouds to the east. They had begun to be sensitive to variation: their first winter had the excitement of novelty and a desperate urgency to it; the second had dullness from the first day, and a mixed quality of disappointment and disturbance:

The decor they had decided upon for the party was traditional, at Creeley's special request. He said he had many memories of Hallowe'en parties, and if the party was to be in the interest of sentiment, let sentiment be properly maintained. So there were hollowed-out pumpkins with candles glowing inside, mouths slit in jagged fruity grins, and pulpy eyes glowing a yellow-green; there were masks and hats and broomsticks with streamers and all the furniture had been taken out of the living room so that they could dance. A table in the reception hall was loaded down with food Hans had spent the whole day preparing.

Yet the total effect was anything but festive. Perhaps it was

the transplanted nature of the occasion, that the pumpkins had been borrowed from an Army Mess in Heidelberg which had flown them in specially from New Jersey. Perhaps it was that the two atmospheres did not mix, the fantasy of All Hallow's Eve, the hob-goblin hocus-pocus of decoration and lighting, and the squat, square, plain German house, over-heavy and smelling of other memories and other feasts. Whatever it was, when Waxman, Halliday and Creeley gathered in the living room for a last-minute going-over of plans, as they stood in the centre of the naked floor, dressed and waiting for festivities, it was with an uneasy feeling that made them talk loudly and mix laughter with every other word, that finally made them crack open a bottle of scotch before the party, breaking a rule that they themselves, not two hours before, had lain down.

By the time the first guest, Mrs. Tisch, arrived, Creeley was well on his way to being drunk. The captain's drinking had an uneasy quality; he was drinking too much, and too quickly; he opened the second bottle of scotch before they had properly finished the first. His greeting to Mrs. Tisch at the door, "Welcome home, Katie!" made them all jump slightly. They stared briefly at each other before bursting into laughter. The three of them rushed forward and ushered her in with such gusto that all Mrs. Tisch could find to say to the captain was:

"I'm early, aren't I, boys?"

"You're never early, never too early," the captain managed gallantly. Waxman and Harry steered Mrs. Tisch to the drinks while Halliday disappeared into the kitchen to get something to eat.

"But my dogs . . . can I bring them in?" Mrs. Tisch asked. "I left them in the car, but now I think they'll be so lonely. . . ."

"I'll get them," Creeley said.

"But how pretty everything is! I'll bet you boys did it all by yourselves. . . ."

Harry, waiting for Mieke's call from the station, looked at his watch. Mrs. Tisch saw him.

"I see you still wear my watch," she said. "You're waiting for someone. You must all have friends here. It's funny that you people should come here. Really everything's so different, but you manage to make it the same. . . ."

"Not quite the same," Harry answered her, not really thinking. "Really it just looks the same. . . ."

"Larry used to say it felt the same . . . you haven't heard from him, have you?" She averted her face briefly, because Waxman, who had been talking to Creeley, turned around at the mention of Porteous' name.

"No, none of us have. . . ."

Halliday also had come back from the kitchen and asked the question that Harry would have avoided.

"Have you, Mrs. T.?"

"No . . . but I expect that was a change. You know he had been here a long time. . . ."

Creeley joined their group. His eyes were pink around the edges, and he held an unlit cigarillo in his mouth.

"He hadn't been here as long as I had. I'd been here twice as long as he had, three times as long. Porteous didn't know anything about this country. You said yourself he thought it was very much the same. To him it was."

"When did you come, Captain?" Waxman asked calmly, leaning his hand on the back of Mrs. Tisch's chair. She had sat down, tired of admiring the decorations.

"Long before Porteous. Porteous was still baking pies in Philadelphia when I came. He didn't know anything about this country."

"Larry got here just after the war, didn't he?" Halliday asked Waxman. "I remember thinking that he had been occupying Cologne in '44. Or some place like that in the British Zone."

"He went to school there," Mrs. Tisch added.

"We'll never know," Waxman interrupted, shifting his

weight from one foot to another. "He could be in two places at the same time. . . ."

Mrs. Tisch smiled.

"You mustn't hold that against him," she said. "He wanted to be there, to be in so many places he didn't have time for. I didn't believe everything he told me. . . ."

"Good thing," Creeley said. "He was the world's worst liar."

The doorbell rang and Halliday admitted Fingar, Tupper, and a girl in her late twenties whom Fingar introduced as Dolly. She was an American and worked in a Red Cross unit in Heidelberg, serving buns, he joked, pinching her on the arm. Dolly was introduced all around and proved capable enough at handling the local banter. Then Waxman's cousin arrived, bringing a friend; then came George Hartman and his wife; and Halliday's mistress, Irma, through the back door from force of habit.

54

IT WAS a good thing they had bought enormous quantities of liquor; everyone seemed bent on oblivion, going at it slowly, but none the less methodically. Soon Harry saw Halliday parading in a Hallowe'en mask, and Irma standing with a pumpkin on her head, and a candle sputtering inside it; Mrs. Tisch and Major Fingar, in the corner near the door, were pouring drinks into each others' glasses, Mrs. Tisch with her cloche of hair a little ragged on the edges, and Fingar with his huge heavy head hanging lower than ever; he saw Waxman and his friend Irene . . . he was really seeing her for the first time . . . she was quiet and very embarrassed, blushing in patches (where was Mieke?) . . . they were squatting on the floor with Irene's friend whose name Harry had never caught, and Waxman was scraping his chin along Irene's

cheek (of course, she wasn't blushing, his beard left little red scratches); he saw the three musicians, a saxophonist, a bass fiddler who doubled with the clarinet, and a midget drummer who had his traps set up less than a foot from the floor. But the whirl of faces was no more than that. It was Creeley who stuck out. The captain had not gone about his drinking either as slowly or as methodically as the rest, and by now, it was going on eight, he looked like a man stumbling through a pantomime of himself. He looked a little like the heavy man in blue twill Harry had seen staggering under his skis at Garmisch; he looked pale and set like the captain who'd muttered next to Harry in the train after the Altenau depot; he also looked like the spruce and incredibly shiny officer they had watched walk up the garden path on the day of his arrival: but none of these images fitted together. He seemed heavy, pale, and shiny in turns, and being alone in the middle of the room, singing quietly to himself . . . it was some marching tune, faintly plaintive, that Harry had never heard . . . he pounced on Harry.

"My dear friend," he said. "This is one jolly good wake, isn't it?" Harry nodded and tried to catch Waxman's eye. "And we're having one hell of a good time, aren't we?" Harry nodded again. He wanted to go down to the station and see if Mieke were there. He felt he needed someone to be alone with. "And you think I'm a lousy bastard, don't you?"

"I'm going down to the station, Captain. Do you want to come along and get some air?"

"That's a good idea, Carey. I'll go down to the station with you. Where are you going?"

"I'm meeting someone. We're not going anywhere."

"That's where you're all wet," Creeley said. "You don't know. You've only just come and you want to go away again. Stay and enjoy the party. I've been nearly six years at this party."

Harry started towards the door.

"You coming, Captain?"

"Of course I'm coming. I said I was coming, didn't I?"

A short sharp rain had started; it seemed to fall from just a few feet over their heads, in little slanting drives.

"Listen, Carey," Creeley said when they were both outside and half-running towards the jeep. "I don't want to go back to that party afterwards. Let's not go back. Let's go somewhere where it's private."

"I tell you, Captain, I'm expecting Mieke. . . ."

"Don't you think she'll come?" Creeley asked unexpectedly.

"She'll come. . . ."

"You want her to come?"

Creeley jumped in the jeep beside Harry. His slightly bulky body gave the impression of extending over the sides of the bucket seat in front. Harry, without thinking, looked over to see. The captain was staring straight ahead while his right hand toyed with the manual control on the windshield wiper.

"I suppose you kick her around, like everyone else. And she expects to marry you, and go over the ocean blue with you, and wake up in a country where you forget, forget, forget. . . ."

"She doesn't expect anything. . . ."

"Ha!" Creeley gave a short sharp laugh and took the cigarillo out of his mouth. "But tell me, why do you big men always have to kick others around? Why did you ever kick Grace Stockley around like that?"

"I didn't touch the girl. . . ."

"And poor Bernhard. You didn't have to laugh at him."

"I didn't. . . ."

"And what the hell have you done over here? No. . . ."
Creeley shook his head savagely, as though trying to clear it. "I've been over here too long, you know. I'd like to tell someone how long. Hey there!" Creeley shouted at Harry. "You're going past the station."

"The bus stops back there, at the end. But I don't see her."

"She's coming," Creeley laughed.

"She's coming all right."

"You're going back with her to that party?"

Harry looked briefly at the captain. With Creeley that night it was hard to decide where the alcoholic intoxication ended and the general intoxication began. Mieke was not there and the captain roared with laughter.

"But she doesn't mean anything to you!" Creeley protested when Harry threatened to get nasty. "They're so stupid—all your feelings of guilt and charity and what you should do and what you shouldn't do. Why don't you just be yourself?"

Harry slammed the car up the hill, and skidded round the corner into their driveway, almost ramming the last of three jeeps drawn up before the front door.

"What the hell?" Harry said. "Aren't those Karlsruhe jeeps?"

"I told you. Don't let's go back. This Pforzheim is more trouble than it's worth. You'd think everything was destroyed, not just the buildings. . . ."

"What I want to know is what the Karlsruhe boys are doing here. . . ."

"Why?"

"Don't you want to know? You're supposed to be the CO of this outfit. Can't we have our own party?"

Harry let the captain go in the door first.

"That your friend?" the captain asked pointing his flabby hand at Mieke.

"That's my friend . . . Mieke. . . ."

"Harry. . . ."

Creeley stepped aside.

"We've been down to fetch you," Creeley said.

"I walked up. I did not think he would come and fetch me."

Harry stopped to stare at Mieke. What had changed in her since Oberwald? She looked the same; still too big for any

room or any man next to her, particularly Creeley's stubby awkward figure; her hair still hung heavily on her forehead where the identical lock fell that she had to brush back whenever she moved her head. It was the voice, perhaps, the tone of voice. Or was it that they were asking each other about whether she had a good trip from Stuttgart and whether he had a good summer, and did the trip take long, and did Harry go back down to Garmisch? That tone made it easy to forget, and most of the evening, though she was always at his side, Harry ignored her.

"I've been all over," Harry said, leading her into the living room. Creeley followed behind. "Did you get away at all?"

"No, I stayed in Stuttgart." She was not embarrassed; she was not even watching him.

As they entered the living room, Gargallo detached himself from a knot of uniforms in the corner by Hans' liquor table.

"Well, Harry. I come not to praise Pforzheim but to bury her. Get rid of that nasty smell. Creeley. . . ." Gargallo nodded to the captain.

"We're not really burying her," Creeley said, "just throwing a little dust over her. . . ."

Gargallo held his nose, the gesture at breakfast, the day before Harry left for Pforzheim.

"Did you have to bring all of them?" Harry asked, pointing to the pack in the corner.

"I didn't invite them. They insisted. It's our turn next you know. We go to Heidelberg."

"Are you kidding?"

Gargallo shook his bald head.

"End of the month. . . ."

"Where does Heidelberg go after that?" Waxman asked, coming over to join them, with his Irene on his arm.

"Heidelberg goes to Stuttgart and Stuttgart to Frankfurt, and Frankfurt to. . . ."

"This is where I came in," Harry muttered.

"You ought to be glad you even saw half the show. The captain and I saw it all, didn't we Captain?" Gargallo asked.

"We did. We did that. And I saw more than that. I saw all the double features there are. . . ."

"Where's Magda?" Harry asked Gargallo, joking.

"Over there, in the corner," Gargallo answered with a perfectly straight face. "She was hoping Larry Porteous would be here, but I got her to come by saying that you would be instead. . . ."

Magda greeted Harry with a big smile.

"A little intimacy makes everything different, doesn't it, boy?" Gargallo asked Harry. "Go on, go say hello to her. She remembers. . . ." Gargallo pushed Harry towards Magda.

"You can't know what you're doing," Harry said. Gargallo's bald head bobbed with laughter.

"I sent Porteous out after the Greek. They were old friends. Thanatopolous just needed to be kept in line, that's all. . . ." Gargallo stretched out a long arm as Magda walked over to them and took her hand. "What do you think of him now?" he asked, pointing Harry out to Magda.

"He looks much less young," she said. "He was afraid of getting his hands dirty. . . ." She extended her hand for Harry to shake. "Too bad. . . ." she was talking in German. "I hear Mr. Porteous has gone home. I suppose he made a big thing out of it?"

"Out of what?" Harry asked stupidly, momentarily too stunned to think clearly.

"You know, that afternoon. We'd seen him before. I knew he'd get the money. That was one thing he really had a nose for. . . ."

"Do you see that woman in the far corner, talking to the major?" Gargallo pointed to Mrs. Tisch with his eyes. "That's another source of income for Larry boy. He took her for everything she had and now he's back in the old USA and

she's still here, and no ocean ever looked wider. She's taking it very well. . . ."

"How do you know all this?" Harry asked Gargallo.

"Look Harry, stop worrying about these little things. You're like Larry. He wanted to ask Magda how the Greek had done away with the rest of Speyer's body, and why he got killed. It bothered him not to know why. Why don't you ask Magda, maybe she knows. . . ."

Harry looked away to Mieke. She was still standing next to him. He took her hand lightly in his own.

"I don't know myself," Magda said. "Anyway, he is not really a big man, my little Greek. But he is fun, and when he's not there everything's so dead. . . ."

"Except Speyer," Gargallo couldn't resist reminding her.

"I can't imagine why he was killed, but why go into it?" Magda answered him, just a little curtly.

"I can tell you why," Harry said, suddenly recovering his voice. "Because someone's interested in it. Interested enough to send me a crazy Arab. . . ."

"Now what are you talking about?" Gargallo asked.

"Someone who's interested and says he knows who did it and why. . . ."

"If you know that, hadn't you better keep it to yourself," Gargallo warned.

"You brought the subject up. . . ."

"Then I can drop it too, right?"

"What man?" Magda asked. "Who is this Arab?"

"Just an Arab. Only he's blond and he's got teeth like a jeweller's window. . . ."

From nowhere, Creeley materialised on the other side of Harry. This time there was no mistaking it. The captain was completely befuddled.

"I know that Arab . . . he was up here last week again. Gave me a tie he said you gave him."

"I gave him a tie," Harry said, as though that explained everything. Gargallo's eyes were shifting rapidly from Harry

to the captain and back again. "And now that you bring it up," Harry said, anger mounting in him because he felt he was being made a fool of, "he brought a message from an old friend of yours, Captain, the man who knows all, the man I should meet, the man from Waldkirch. . . ."

"That's jolly damned good. I'm glad," Creeley said.

"Why don't you shut up, you fool," Gargallo said calmly to Creeley.

"You can't tell me to shut up," the captain answered. "He was an old friend of mine. You just said we'd seen it all . . . this was something you didn't see. . . ."

55

NO ONE could quite say the next morning how they all ended the evening at the Club Pfau in Stuttgart. Harry thought the trip to Stuttgart had been Gargallo's suggestion, whispered first to him in secret (Gargallo wanted to leave behind the two MG officers, Fingar and Tupper . . . he called them old ladies, and, anyway, the major's head hung lower every minute like a wounded bull's) and later passed on in a sort of chain from dancer to dancer, downstairs and in the upstairs rooms to Halliday and Irma, to Waxman and his Irene. But his impression was that it became a mass movement, that the house somehow became too confined for their various tensions, that there were not enough corners for the points-of-view, that the ride through the cold night was an elementary urge to wildness and irresponsibility, cheered by all, in the haste and pandemonium of reaching the cars and turning over the coughing motors in the acrid blue from the collective exhausts.

Until that moment when all the barriers broke, there had been a sense of formality, almost of ritual, in their wake; but also a sense of futility, for the party was only for themselves

and the Germans they could possess, almost at will, in the copious beds upstairs. The *Pfau* provided them with direct contact; there the affront was direct and called for retaliation; there the official was truly shed and the party overlapped their own peculiar kind of inbreeding; there All Hallow's Eve lost some of its quality of a parochial joke and became more universally macabre; there they were few among many rather than many among few, and being few brought out their differences far more than being many, while at the same time, being few among many united them.

But at the beginning there were quick re-alignments among them, quick and unsuspected. For instance there was that new, peculiar bond between Creeley and Gargallo, that at first seemed based on nothing more than a kind of seniority, then took on aspects of a great deal more than that. Then there was Magda's vicious quarrel with their host, Thanatopolous, who came out of the shadows of the Club and greeted them each in turn by their proper names, shaking each hand and being introduced to the women, quite the old friend of the family. There was Mrs. Tisch, who didn't go through any sort of re-alignment. She had no alignment to start with. She came with Creeley, then drifted to a group that sat with Harry at tables; then pushed on to another group with Waxman, Halliday, Weinstein and a few of the louder voices from Karlsruhe.

There was haste in everything they did. The first drinks, better than the liquor they had served at Pforzheim, went down rapidly, and the talk came on quickly; quarrels burst to the surface and disappeared with the same violence. Waxman made some angry remarks about Harry, Harry and Creeley, Harry and Porteous, and had to be restrained by Halliday, upon which Creeley got up and started remonstrating with that table and Waxman, lifting Irene with him—she had her arm crooked in his elbow—called Creeley a "bloody fag", and Gargallo shouted to Waxman to sit down and stop making a nuisance of himself. But Creeley went on protesting and Harry tried to get the captain to sit down, but at the same

time he tried to make Creeley sit down he was beginning to put two and two together, or ask why two and two did not make four.

Magda's argument started innocently enough, because Gargallo had asked her to drink a little less than the whole bottle on each swig that she took. Magda—she was true to herself—got up and had to be prevented from assaulting Thanatopolous and said that some people didn't care much what they did as long as they got what they wanted. Thanatopolous asked just what the hell Magda meant. She then remarked that Thanatopolous was too much of a goddam coward to do anything himself, and that everyone knew he was too afraid even to undress in bed. Then the word Arab occurred in a verbal flurry that Harry never heard the whole of, being hard put to restrain the captain, who was still defending himself against the whole room in a loud voice, standing heavily on his heels, his hands out at his sides, as though gripping invisible railings on either side of him, and heading not at all towards Waxman's table but right towards a nest of Germans in the corner.

That was how the major quarrel started, because Creeley refused to believe that they were Germans. He continued to flay them in his rather high voice as though they were Waxman, and when they started answering in kind, only in good Stuttgarter Deutsch, he too broke into that language—he had not spoken it much before and Harry was surprised by his proficiency—only insulting three to one. Then some of the table nearest to the scene crowded into the act, and one stalwart young man picked up his chair and brought it down on the captain's shoulder. It was a light cheap chair and it broke with a loud crack and the captain seemed more surprised than hurt. But instead of the lull that often accompanies such decisive action, the melee was immediate. Harry distinctly saw who it was who clubbed Creeley into silence with a closed fist on the top of his balding head. It was Gargallo, with a rather grim smile on his face.

ANNUALLY, THE baron organised a great hunt on his estates in the former principality of Schaumburg-Lippe. He had hunted even in 1944, when the Allied armies surged towards his domain, though without much success. It was a year of disorganisation and there had been thefts, poachings on his preserve. The next year was much better, though the herds had been decimated. The local population was disarmed, and things had returned to sound organisation.

Harry's invitation, which arrived a few days after Hallowe'en, caused one of the last quarrels in Pforzheim. Creeley insisted on accompanying him.

"You can do what you want, can't you, Captain?" Harry answered. Creeley had kept entirely to himself since the party, and had not issued a single order.

"Why didn't you tell me you had been to see him?" Creeley's pudgy body shook with hatred.

"You didn't ask me."

"What did he tell you?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"Yes, he did. He told you something. I know him. He wouldn't invite you unless he had. Do you know how many people try to go to these things?" The captain paused; his hesitation was evident, his lack of self-control so obvious that Harry felt sorry for him.

"Why don't you understand, Carey? Why don't you know anything about it?" Creeley asked.

"Can I go?" was all Harry asked.

"What did he tell you? What did you go for in the first place?"

"I was asked to go."

"How were you asked?"

"Ali came up here. . . ."

"Who's Ali?"

"The Arab. You saw him."

"The fellow with the blond hair, very tall . . . with gold teeth?"

"That's him."

"I know he told you something."

"Can I go?" Harry repeated.

"Yes, you can go. I shall go too."

"Mrs. Tisch is going too. I saw her this morning."

"Mrs. Tisch is going. I shall go."

Harry started out of the office door.

"Wait," the captain called. "I don't want you to go. I'll go."

"I've got to go too, Captain," Harry answered quietly.

"And I'm telling you you can't go."

Harry walked out of the office. In these moods the captain was not a man to be reasoned with. Harry knew he had to go. For the captain's opposition, he had no respect. Creeley could go too. It would make a nice reunion. Perhaps Bernhard-St. Peter would be there, perhaps Colonel Richepin, perhaps the Greek. It was being organised as a very large hunt, and as long as the right distinctions were being made between hunters and hunted, that was all right. He told himself it would make a good last act, come what may. Since the party so many once-divergent paths had turned out to cross. He had meant it when he had thought of it as a reunion. It would be a last reunion, and at the end they'd all be singing "For he's a jolly good fellow. . . ." And that would take the sting out of departure for all of them.

57

HE HAD been standing five minutes on the knoll: sullen, immobile, head low, in charging stance. He was black and beastly, brutal and refractory. He stood without watching, no bright eye, no challenge; an eye lowering, sidelong,

scowling, a beast's look. His tracks ran up the incline, dark blots where he had dented the powdered snow to the leaf-mould below. These were in two tiny rows. He carried his weight lightly; his was a quick sideways dog-trot. He was inclined to stop his trot, as he had just done now; his stop was so sudden that his previous motion seemed an illusion . . . now he was a stump, a mound, a trick of shade. His ears dropped in their tufts of bristle, then pricked up for a sound no hunter heard, for the many hundred all around. It was some too-heavy breathing of a beater five hundred yards to the lee. He snuffed, insulted, grunted, a coarse squib, a breath and a snort; then, sure-footed but odd-gaited, cruppered low, his tusks now jutting from his lips, he ran to the far side of the hill, cracking dead wood, rooting up leaves, travelling straight on some narrow, well-known path.

General and Lady Bodkin and their party had just come up to the blind. Christoph the huntsman pointed something out to them, probably where the old fellow, *der Alte* was, the mange-eaten, misanthropic boar. Stephanie, Lady Bodkin, had a Mauser slung familiarly over her forearm, barrel pointed to the ground.

The general was standing very straight. He was wearing a tweed shooting jacket with leather patches on the elbows. His uniform pants were used and worn, but pressed to razor sharpness. He had sandy hair, going white, or rather straw coloured, a moustache, the same colour, and skin the yellow of saddle-soap.

Stephanie was dressed with the utmost hunting chic: jacket of houndstooth check, riding breeches, supple leather knee-boots, gun-metal grey hair carefully tinted blue. She straightened, puffed on her cigarette, exhaled, slowly, through her nostrils. It was getting cold; they were all waiting for the general to let her take the first shot.

HARRY WAS with the baron's party, half a mile away. They had spotted only three sows and their pigs all afternoon. The boar loves family life, and these were all basking together, mud thick on their hair, on the sunny side of a slope, in the heart of a ring of bushes. Creeley was not of the party, but Bernhard was there, carrying the baron's gun cases. A long rifle, a Mauser, a .22, a blunt shotgun. He had shaved off his beard, and looked very young. It seemed he had always accompanied the baron on these hunts.

The hunters were all very quiet, strung out along a line where the boar was meant to pass, prodded by the beaters to their right, downwind.

They waited. They waited until it was almost dark, but they were after only one boar. They saw others, crushing through underbrush, following the trails they have made, dark, fast; some had been frightened on other parts of the preserve and were running, running and stopping, running and stopping. The men watching them kept still and silent. They were not shooting for just any boar.

IT WAS evening, and the party was gathered round the tremendous fire of the lodge.

Katrina Tisch arrived, late, driven from the station that night by an obscurely helpful British subaltern. Almost immediately a quarrel began with Lady Stephanie, who had been drinking . . . a small amount of liquor was enough to put an edge of nerves to her arrogance. Katrina had brought her dogs and they paddled into the lodge on their long leashes right at Katrina's ankles. The baron's dogs, outside, set up their own howling. The dachshund bitch was over familiar and sniffed

at Stephanie's ankles; having sniffed, she licked. Katrina was being greeted rather brusquely by von Kreilsheim and did not notice it. Lady Stephanie gave the bitch a little kick.

"Horrible German dogs," she said to Major Cruikshank, a member of her party.

Lady Stephanie had changed into evening clothes and wore yellow dress shoes with high sharp heels. Nana yelped and then set up a squeaky bark. Mrs. Tisch turned around.

"Nana," she rushed over to her dog. "What's the matter?"

"Are these *your* dogs?" Lady Stephanie asked.

"This is Nana," Mrs. Tisch said. She called for her other dog who had subsided before the fire. The dog wouldn't stir. "That one's Rollo. Isn't he lazy?"

"They're horrible *German* dogs," Stephanie repeated, this time with a glint of dangerous rage in her voice.

The baron, near them, turned his back and withdrew to the comfort of the fire. Harry came up to greet Mrs. Tisch, rather happy to see her. Katrina was flustered, but gave Harry her cheek to kiss.

"Do you know Lady Stephanie?" Harry asked. "This is Mrs. Tisch. . . ." Harry started to introduce them.

"Do you like dachshunds too, Mister Carey?" Lady Stephanie asked.

"What's the matter with the Roly-polys?"

Lady Stephanie turned away.

"Larry used to hate them too, you know," Katrina said to Harry. "He said they were obscene."

"Stephanie was making a scene, I gather," Cruikshank said.

"Oh no," Mrs. Tisch intervened. "I can understand."

"It seems so pointless to blame dogs for being German. . . ." Cruikshank saw that he was being tactless. "I mean they can't help it." He flushed.

Creeley drifted over from the fire where he had been seated next to Bernhard on the low sofa, engaged in earnest conversation. He was chewing nervously on the stub of a

cigarillo. Harry felt one of those shifts of power that had become commonplace in his relationship with Creeley; the power was now all in Harry's hands. The captain seemed to recognise it, as he had acknowledged it tacitly by coming to the hunt on his own, without Harry. It was something like the shift Harry experienced at the Moral Rearmament meeting, a sort of realisation that everyone is afraid. But Harry had not yet sorted out the captain's fears.

"I was surprised to see you here, Carey," the captain began, as though noticing Harry for the first time. "I thought I had told you not to come." Harry nodded.

"I thought *you* weren't coming, Captain. . . ."

"Did you see your old friend?" the captain pointed to Bernhard.

"I expected him. . . ."

"You did?" Creeley seemed genuinely surprised.

"You're the one who told me the story, Captain."

"That's true," Creeley answered, walking away and throwing his cigar in the fire. "But I didn't tell it all."

"No, you didn't."

"You weren't interested."

"That hasn't changed, Captain. . . ."

Creeley looked at Harry sharply.

"I wasn't questioning that, Carey. I just wondered why you expected Freihausen?"

"So . . . Saint Peter has a last name! I noticed the baron seemed to accumulate loyalties."

"Why do you have to insult people, Carey?"

"I'm sorry. You asked me."

"You don't want to hear the rest of the story? I think it's important. . . ."

"No, Captain, I don't."

"What are you afraid of?"

"I'm not afraid. I'm here just on business."

"Business! Von Kreilsheim doesn't know anything."

"What's there to know, Captain?"

Creeley was evasive.

"Whatever you're looking for."

Harry felt unable to explain to the captain. He was not expecting to find anything. How could he? He was not even sure what he was looking for, at least beyond the answers to his own questions. And his own questions had nothing to do with the Greek, Speyer's head, currency reforms, or the Kaserne. He was after other mysteries.

"I'm not looking for anything, Captain. I just want to know."

"I can tell you what you're looking for."

Harry grew impatient with the captain. The evening was dwindling. The guests were tired. There was another day to the hunt tomorrow. The hunt would last a week.

"I could bust you for coming up without my permission. You know that, don't you?"

"I've already applied for my discharge, Captain. I haven't got far to go down anyway."

Creeley laughed. Reminiscent laughter. Anxious laughter.

"You can go down a lot more, Carey, believe me."

It was the last threat the captain made to Harry, and also the least important. Harry was no longer worried about getting out from under, and the captain, he knew, no longer could. Harry knew that this gave him the advantage in their little game of hide-and-seek. He was calling the blind man's bluff.

60

THE FOLLOWING morning broke clear and sunny. The hunt began again in earnest. Hunters were up at dawn, batmen oiling rifles, beaters finishing early breakfasts, the baron's kennel keepers restraining the hounds, not to be used until the last day. Harry was not among the hunters. A sleepless Creeley came to his bed before dawn, and shaking him

gently by the shoulder, showed him a message from Major Fingar, just received by special courier.

The CID had caught Thanatopolous in Munich on some minor black-market charge; their methods of interrogation had been effective, for the Greek, with Gargallo called specially down from Karlsruhe, had apparently admitted his complicity in the murder of Johann Speyer of Pforzheim. Then, handed over to the MPs, there had been a slip-up. On one of the main streets, and handcuffed to another prisoner, Thanatopolous had broken loose, ducked into a tall apartment house, and vanished. The CIC, which had initiated the investigation, was being called upon to follow up the case. The major had ended his note with a sarcastic word for Harry: "Wasn't this a friend of yours?"

"I've got to stay here," Creeley said. "You know about this. . . ."

"Imala said the baron knew about it too. . . ." Harry was hardly awake.

"You'll go through, won't you?"

"OK, OK, Captain, I'll go. I don't expect to find anything and I don't believe anything. Thanatopolous would never talk to the CID."

"Under a beating?" Creeley shivered, huddled in a thick raincoat.

"Where'll I start?"

"Munich. I think that's obvious. They may have a trail by the time you get there. You'll probably find half Karlsruhe there. . . ."

"Take care of the boar for me, won't you, Captain?" Harry was sitting on the side of the bed, rubbing his back sleepily.

"The baron doesn't know anything. You just remember that, Carey. The baron knows nothing about this. I don't even believe in that Arab of yours. I've never seen him."

"That's what you say now. He's real enough. Ask von Kreilsheim."

"Von Kreilsheim knows nothing about it."

"Well, I'll be back to ask anyway. . . ."

Creeley sat down on a wooden chair while Harry dressed. He watched Harry's every movement.

"Say good-bye to Katrina for me, will you, Captain?"

"She's gone."

"Well, good for the Lady Stephanic. She's purged herself. She can breathe that pure Occupation air again."

"She sent you her regrets and asked you to see her in Pforzheim when you came back."

"Thanks."

"She also wanted to know if you had heard from Porteous . . ."

The captain grinned.

"She knows I haven't."

"You can ask the Greek when you see him. He must have some of her money."

The wittiest kind of remark.

"You can go to hell, Captain."

Creeley mock-saluted Harry and lit one of his cigarillos.

"So long," he waved.

61

THERE WAS nothing at CID Munich, as Harry had expected. But there was at least something in Munich. A beaming Levine bumped into Harry on the street. The first thing he found time to say from chewing on a heavy oblong cigar, was that Harry had changed.

"You're serious, lad . . . you used to hop around the surface of things. . . ."

"I'm glad to see you," Harry said simply. "A human face looks good. What have you been up to?"

"You're thin too," Levine said, turning Harry around to

look at him. "I've got just the thing for you. Come tonight, at half past eight." He wrote Harry an address on a slip of paper and thrust it into his hand. Conference of Jewish Writers, the paper read, Amalienstr. 25. "That ought to fix you up. If you don't over-eat and don't get surfeited with the dreariest mystical conversation this side of the Oder, it won't be because I'm not trying."

"So that's what you're doing," Harry said. "You've become a Jewish writer."

Levine rocked with laughter. It was good to see him, Harry thought. He hadn't had a good laugh in months. Not the right kind of laugh.

"I'm just taking care of them. I dip their bread in the soup, that's all. I take their minds off the camps once a week and promise them translations from the Yiddish. I really can't give them much more."

"You're sure? You're not chronicling life in Deutschland?"

"It can't be done. I haven't seen any life."

"All right, I'll come," Harry said. "Only it should be done. . . ."

"What would you call it?"

"Anything would do, you know, as long as it was bitter as hell. You could call it the *Third Reich* or *Deutschland*, *Deutschland*—something to rub it in—I'll be there. Maybe one of your writers will have a title: *All's quiet in the gaschambers* or something like that——"

"You come, but come in a better mood. . . ."

Levine disappeared down the street, fat, pleased.

The table groaned. Smoked salmon, sturgeon, herring, mackerel, pastrami, corned beef, sausage from Poland, from Hungary, green pickles, red pickles, pickled tomatoes, pickled cauliflower, gherkins, onions, checses, sweetmeats, sweet wine, black bread, matzohs, borscht in turcens, challah, twisted and white.

"Mortenstein the lyric poet, Hatavy the epic novelist. . . ."
Levine introduced the men around the table, grave, bearded,

patriarchal, some of them; others thin, twisted and smiling. "Gold, he's the man for you, Harry . . . he has a theory of absurdity. . . ."

Gold took Harry's hand, caressingly. He had big, soft, gentle hands. The introductions over, Levine took Harry aside before seating him.

"What brings you to Munich?" he asked.

"I'm chasing a Greek. . . ."

"Going to catch him?"

"I doubt it."

Harry sat down next to the philosopher called Gold.

"What did he do?" Levine asked.

"Nothing very much," Harry said patiently. "Nothing hundreds of others don't do every day. . . ."

"That covers a multitude of sins," Gold put in.

"He's supposed to be mixed up in a murder."

"You don't think he is?"

"No."

"Why bother with him then?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders.

"I do what I'm told."

"Then you don't believe he ought to be caught?" Levine asked friendlily. He poured wine all around.

"I haven't lost any belief that he's wrong," Harry said, looking up.

"Who said you did?"

Hatavy, an old man, one of the patriarchs, turned to Harry.

"He probably sells what I sell. Every day. Whenever I can get anything. I sell it." He spoke very halting English.

"Why shouldn't I?"

"It's not the same thing," Harry said, not quite sure why it was not. He didn't want to say that perhaps the epic novelist needed to.

"You know who he is, Louis?" Levine asked the novelist.

"The Greek?" Hatavy paused. "I think so. If it's the same

one. He's not a Greek. He paid a lot of money for his citizenship. Money will do for him. I like being a German."

"Yes, he likes being a German. A German Jew. It does something for his soul," Levine said.

Hatavy answered seriously.

"I smell the same. Ninety-nine dinners out of a hundred I eat the same. My soap is made from fish, my fish from soap. I defecate in the same way. Inside and out I'm the same. The only difference is that I'm happy to be like that. Your Greek wants to be something else. Or he would be like I am. His real name is Silverberg. You're right. He would not kill anybody. He believes in religion. But he wants to be a liver on a big scale. He likes to be loose and fat. But he smells the same."

"We all smell the same," Gold said. He displayed his hands over the table, first bringing them together and then separating them.

"But most of you Americans never get touched. None of it rubs off on you. You carry your country around with you. It means more to you than just a country. It is, as you are always so happy to put it," he drew a large circle over his plate, ". . . a way of life. . . ."

"I wish I knew how," Harry said.

"How to what?"

"How to get out of it."

"You needn't worry," Gold said. "When you go home, you'll forget all about it."

Harry stirred restlessly. The conversation was depressing him. He felt the pressure mounting inside him. He didn't want to think any more.

"Do you know where I might find him?" he asked Hatavy.

"Yes," the novelist answered gravely. "But why should I tell you? I saw him this afternoon. He stayed last night with me."

"Please tell me," Harry said. "I know it's ridiculous. I don't care. Just give me a lead."

Hatavy looked at Levine, and Levine nodded.

"He's gone to Stuttgart. Do you know where to find him there?"

"I think so."

Harry got up from the table.

"Will you excuse me? I have to go."

"Don't be an ass, Harry," Levine said. "Eat your dinner. He'll wait."

Harry sat down again. Levine was right. Anyone was right. He was tired.

"What you need is a good bowl of bortsch," Levine said, handling the ladle deftly. "Pass me your plate."

62

THE CHASE began at five in the morning. They picked up their old Opel at the Stuttgart CIC Motor Pool—Imala, who had been staying the week at Pforzheim in spite of Creeley's orders, cold, slapping his arms against his leather coat, and Harry, more hungry than cold, soaked to the bone from driving, in November, six hours in an open jeep through a wet and unpleasant ground-fog.

They had to wake up the duty sergeant. He came out of his shack almost to his ears in a khaki turtle-neck sweater, rubbing his eyes, reaching for the trip tickets on the clipboard. He found the car among acres of surplus hoists, winches, bulldozers and hydraulic jacks; then starting the car, got it to turn over once. After that once it spluttered and wheezed, but would not start. The sergeant gave the machine to a German mechanic who had been following them, like a well-bred Oriental woman, ten paces behind. Then the three of them waited around the sergeant's hut while the car was being repaired.

The sergeant let some old coffee boil up on the oil stove and gave Harry a cup without offering one to Ali.

"It's got to be back tonight," the sergeant said. His mind was just beginning to function. "You guys quit fooling around in them."

Harry said: "I'll try," and pushed his requisition slip across the table to him.

"And not over fifty. . . ."

You smug bastard, Harry said to himself. It won't go over fifty, and you know it. The car's supposed to be old and assimilate itself to the country. It's got to be out of joint and half useless. He poured a cup of coffee for Imala and passed it to him.

Harry enjoyed observing the electricity. Imala because he was an Arab and older, wiser, and more luxurious than either the sergeant or Harry, or any German, made the ignorant bristle, and this was no exception. It was the way Imala knew these things, the way he toyed with them. Another minute and Harry imagined the sergeant asking Imala to wait outside.

"That your driver?" the sergeant asked, pointing to Ali. Harry had forgotten all the jokes he knew to answer people like the sergeant. Germans and Americans alike. They were all swimming in a great sea alongside an upturned ship, drowning together and squalling about it. Whenever some poor bastard came along and tried (sensibly enough) to slap his arm over a piece of driftwood, then they all fell on him. A hundred hands were there to push his head under water and make sure he never came up again. That was what he had had to face in a year: the insufficiency of superiors and the malice of inferiors.

Imala was looking the sergeant over carefully and edging his way behind the pot-bellied stove which Harry stroked absent-mindedly. Only he was happy, completely happy. He smiled deep in his Arab eyes with pleasure. He would always be happy as long as they were on the go. No matter how absurd the business. And he had had the sergeant. He sucked his coffee in deep draughts between his gold teeth.

Finally everything was ready. By then it was a quarter past six. It was cold and raw in November throughout the Zone. Not as cold as the first winter after the war, but cold enough to make the Opel spew steam from its exhaust.

They got on the Autobahn and started into Stuttgart. The highways were bare, few of the detours repaired. They travelled under bridges, up side roads, and watched where, on the beautiful empty interrupted stretches of the Autobahn, weeds split the grades and embankments so artfully planned for the Wehrmacht's advances. They stopped for coffee and gasoline.

They went into the snack bar and chatted. Imala seemed to know all the waitresses. He joked with one of them about the bushes. Now that American women were over-running the Zone, Imala announced to all in the room, the contractors were planning sanitary facilities . . . real Texaco washrooms they'd be in the thriller language of this Berlinised Arab, but no ads. of coy little girls showing their mothers it was just like home. It wasn't and the women knew it and forgot it. There were other advantages. The Arab smiled when talking about American women. It made the girls in the snack bar think he could have them. There was a breath of coyness in one of the waitresses. She could not take her eyes off Imala's heavy gold signet ring. Ach, Herr Imala! Every time you are a little richer!

Imala saw into them all with his lazy Arab invention. Harry watched his expressions change when he talked about the American women. Beginning to pour in everywhere into their enclosures, those rich bodies behind barbed wire in the ghostly middles of cities, in destructionless blocks of apartments or small suburban type houses, primed and polished, real communities, but locked off. And as for the waitresses, who had not deserved this probably, for walking all the way from Silesia, what ingenuity the Ami wives used to wrest the poor lipstickless Fräulein from the sodden schnapps-red sergeants they had married! Cigarettes tossed in puddles,

ashes put in the food left on their plates: the burden of superiority.

There were no women there that early, but the atmosphere was there. And Imala wasn't supposed to be. It was for "Allied Personnel Only". A true German wouldn't wait on Ali ben Imala. They got one meal a day from the Quartermaster Corps for keeping their feet on the ground.

Then they were coming down the hills, following a heavy truck with soldiers behind a tarpaulin. Because it was still a little dark and grey, the city had that mystery of cities at night, a few lights on all levels. What the lights mean of Greek or Roman, of flat or oblong, or of high, whole, or demolished . . . everything waits for the light, suspended in a sort of gloom.

Harry was still angry with himself. So he got himself in a little deeper, made himself snugger in his resentment. A fool errand. But at least Imala was happy. He whistled gaily to himself. Harry had not even told him where they were going. When they reached Stuttgart proper, Harry rode all the way down close behind the truck until he could see all the cold huddled ponchos on the soldiers' knees behind the wet tarpaulin and could see that they weren't soldiers at all but some poor group of DPs such as was always shifting and roving at night on the road, faces all thrust deeply in the dark, indifferent to surroundings.

What Harry feared most was something he could not tell Imala. It was something he feared for only that one moment when they spiralled down, a little too fast, into the blue-plumed exhaust of the truck. The gun contained the idea like a bullet of its own, and the gun fitted snugly in his pocket, heavy against his hip.

They got lost after leaving the truck with its destinationless load in an area of big-paned factories and tarpaulin-shrouded lumps on warehouse docks, and while they were getting lost the fear left him. Harry looked at Imala's face, its long Arab nose over a high upper lip, the gold teeth gleaming

faintly from the tip of his cigarette. Imala wasn't worrying. But that didn't help Harry. What was Thanatopolous to Harry?

Harry had made the rounds of petty vice in his eleven-month gestation. The Greek had done everything, he supposed, about the same way as the rest, perhaps with a little more bravado: sold his stolen cars higher, smuggled more penicillin, betrayed with more braggadocio, pandered with more sniggering pleasure, corrupted more, and for what? The Greek was a true parasite. He fed on the dead rather than the living. Only Harry had a little hierarchy in his own mind. Always there was someone higher. Somewhere, someone's dope, someone's tyres, blankets, beef, gas, tobacco, were better than the Greek's, sold for more, cost more.

The prevalence of sin, its fine adherence to, and coherence with, himself. Well . . . now it was simply time to leave. He had never expected to solve anything, nor to have won or lost. It had, once, seemed useful. But now, it was time to be up and go. So why was he chasing the Greek?

Thanatopolous, they said, was always running. Now he wouldn't have to run any more, only how far would Harry have to run? That was the gist of it. How far? And from what? It was clearer, now, somehow, being afraid of the country, and being lost in a city, seeing its silences and refusals, its lameness, its obstinacy.

The only time Harry talked a lot was when he was ashamed of himself. Now he made a bet they wouldn't find Thanatopolous. He complained about the cold. He asked: why the hotel?

"He'll be there," Ali said.

They stopped the Opel and left it with the motor running. The hotel underground, the Bunker Hotel: down they went, down the stairs under the debris.

"If I were him. . . ."

"What?" Harry asked.

"He won't be where you want. He ate well last night, at

a restaurant where you or I—we could not go. He eats there, he goes out, he dances. Always business. You understand?"

They were in front of the desk from which the four corridors, poorly ventilated and lighted, radiated, with doors regularly spaced down their sides.

"Don't you see," Imala went on. "Well, you don't."

They asked after the Greek at the desk.

"And when you find him?"

"I'll question him," Harry answered.

"Buy a good dinner . . . from him, I mean. For me too. Dance. Buy something from him."

The clerk shook his head.

"You can look if you want," he said. "There are no doors . . . to prevent concussion."

Harry took out a cigarette.

"Danke, danke. . . ."

Harry looked away at Imala and the clerk took another.

"He'll be back tonight! He's always here at about nine."

"What do we do all day?" asked Imala, when they were outside.

"Suit yourself."

"Pah!" Ali said scornfully. "These people," he pointed out of the window of the car, "have nothing to sell, nothing to buy with. What sort of fun is that?" Imala laughed, showing his teeth. "Plenty of hotels have doors. . . ."

"You stupid Arab. . . ."

"Stop worrying. Come on, get in."

Back to the Bunker at nine. That clerk was off-duty. There was no Thanatopolous.

"Come on, Mister Harry," Imala said. "We can try the Club."

Next they tried the *Pfau*.

"You go in first, Expert. . . ." Harry said.

No one had seen Thanatopolous. Harry stood at the second floor door. The Greek was inside, Harry argued loudly with the tuxedoed headwaiter. From behind him came the sound

of a plenty hot jazz band. Harry went on arguing, but they weren't going to let him in. He couldn't decide whether they remembered him. The headwaiter was backed up by another waiter. Someone shouted from inside.

"Was ist's denn? Noch eine Ami?"

Harry looked to the Arab for support. Imala was looking the other way and lighting a cigarette. After the shout there was a scuffle and scattered hoots. The longer Harry stood there the louder the taunts became.

Harry asked the headwaiter where Thanatopolous was.

"Zu Hause," the waiter said, pointing towards Winnenden. He seemed surprised that Harry hadn't asked him before. Ali stayed and got exact directions while Harry called Stuttgart CIC from a phone booth in the hall. He thought someone ought to know where he was going. After Harry had explained, the CQ asked:

"Who is she?"

Then he hung up.

63

HARRY LET Imala drive. After what seemed like an endless grind in second, Ali let the car ease off on the other side of the big hills towards Winnenden. For a moment it seemed they were lost again, and Harry unconsciously felt for the gun in his pocket. It was still there. The road dwindled; they went on. Abruptly, a cross-roads, and then on again.

How could you tell what the mind would bring to the surface next? When you were living on the raw edge of nerve, when you'd overstayed your freedom and ease? Suddenly Harry remembered about man, loving him, and never being as close as in the joy of death that lies in fear? Had anyone ever told him that? But why had he missed? Why had it passed him by? Once again he felt that this was where he had

come in, sick with fear and self-loathing, all the way back to Kassel. And now it was time to be up.

To be up and go.

Suddenly they were swinging blindly away from a pair of moon-round headlights with other, smaller headlights within them. Enemy lights that came lunging out of the side of the road, from along a fence they had been paralleling, that disappeared into a deep red darkness faster almost than their own tail-lights. The Opel stalled with stopping too fast. They were in front of a driveway, behind which they looked out on to a trough of faint light and some low out-buildings, rather like stables. Next to them the fence hummed like telephone wire.

Harry, out of the car, sniffed the air.

"Smells like a farm, Ali. . . ."

Imala said nothing, out of superstition.

They went into the drive. There was one light at the top of an old frame house.

"This must be it. . . ."

Harry looked back briefly at Imala. They both knew whose car it was; they knew the chase could not end here, probably not at all. The hunt palled. Harry's fear, instead of being localised, the gun clutched in his pocket, fear ready to go off at any minute, was now that numb fear of before, that fear of coping with sullen oppositions that partook, in the cities, of the ruins, of weariness, recrimination, hostility, but here of the night, darkness, nature, an antique awe, where superstition is tolerated, magic real.

They climbed the stairs to the third floor where the only light showed. The room was the length of the whole floor, and in the middle was a table. Apart from plates and glasses from which a meal had been recently eaten, the table at which the old man sat, his head bald and veinless like a death's head, was laid as though for solitaire under a single lamp hung from the ceiling and shaded with a heavy cloth.

Squatting, lying, stretching, were five huge short-haired dogs. They lay and sat without moving or barking.

"Ask the old man where?" Harry said. He threw a piece of bread off the table at one of the dogs. It whined, turned tail, and folded up in a corner on a pile of newspapers.

"He must love dogs," Ali said.

"Why don't the damned animals bark?"

Harry took the old man by the arm, trying to make him stand up.

"Stand up," Harry said.

He sank down further in his chair.

"You know why they won't bark?" Imala asked.

He had stopped smiling a long time before.

"Stand up, you stupid old man," Harry said.

"He can't hear."

The old man nodded as Imala pointed to his own ear. Ali lifted him out of his chair by the collar and slapped him across the mouth. The old man nodded wearily at the Arab.

"He can't talk either. Jesus Christ. Here," Harry said, giving the old man a sheet of paper, "write it out." He thrust a pencil into his hand. "Schreiben Sie."

Imala towered over the old man while he bent over the table writing an address in a painfully clear script.

"Isn't that just like the Greek," Harry said. "All the help in the world."

The slip of paper took them to Thanatopolous' apartment in the city. But first they had to call in the Landespolizei. The CIC did not have the power to arrest.

The apartment was tiny and filled with photographs of Magda. Of course, because the Landespolizei had taken nearly an hour to come racing down Tübingenstrasse in their shiny American jeep, the Greek had left.

They had only two rooms to search.

In the first they found a trunk filled with old magazines. Pictures of German singing stars and vaudeville comedians.

There were a few pasteboard cigarette coupons with pictures of Hollywood stars.

In the other room, in which there was a bed, a narrow iron cot, there was a chest of drawers, in which there were a few old shirts with frayed collars, and more photographs of Magda, including a pair of her naked, leaning against a tree stump that bore the legend: From the Schwarzwald.

"He could afford better," Imala said, picking up the photographs one by one, while the policemen turned over the bed and ripped open the mattress. They were enjoying themselves.

They left the apartment in a shambles, and returned to their cars which were idling outside with their headlights on. The street was empty.

Harry gave each of the Landespoliczei two cigarettes, the last ones in his package. The policemen, frugal, put them in a little tin box filled with butts of various lengths. Imala had stayed behind, upstairs.

"Come on down, Ali, we might as well go home," Harry called up the stairs.

There was no answer.

"Ali!" Harry shouted again and started up the stairs.

The Arab was not in the apartment. Harry looked in both rooms. Then he called down to the street for the Landespoliczei to help, but he was too late. They were just pulling out.

"Ali!" Harry shouted a last time. He went up to the roof. The night was cold. Streetcars sent cold electric flashes into the hills. The roof was bare; a ventilator turned in a slow wind from the north.

HARRY REACHED the hunting lodge a little after seven next morning. The sun had risen, but was hidden in a thick mist that hugged the ground and huddled in hollows in the hills. Foliage, bark stripping from trees, sunken dead logs were wary shapes on the path Harry took to rejoin the hunt. The earth seemed attentive; sounds carried. Birds flapped in the top branches, invisible, disturbing the mist, whirring in the air. The path was hard, even under the dead leaves.

Harry waited and listened. The sounds all came from the east, but muffled into scuffles, hollow crashes in the thick brake, and suddenly the flinty thwack of a shot. Harry hurried forward. As he drew near he heard first shouts and then the raucous bark of the pack. Then suddenly he came on the hunt.

They were marshalled in a wide circle strung across a valley of dense scrub. He could distinguish the baron, standing at the lowest point of the circle, Lady Stephanie, opposite from him, half hidden by a white birch, Creeley, standing next to the baron, short and heavy, the general, standing next to him, a giant, erect and leaning on his gun, General von B., next to him . . . the circle was tightening. In the centre were the hounds, whining with excitement, barking hoarsely, some twenty or more, yapping, jumping on each other's hind quarters. Lady Stephanie was in the heart of a cluster of beaters, all armed, their gun barrels moist and dull grey.

Harry ran the rest of the way. In the centre of the dense covert was the boar, wounded, but how badly no one present knew. Three of the strongest dogs surrounded his lair, yelling furiously. They saw him within, but were wary. They could not approach. The boar was not to be forced from the advantage of his position.

"What happened?" Harry asked the baron.

"Major Cruikshank got a piece of him. . . . We don't know how badly he is wounded. The dogs can't seem to force him out."

Creeley nodded curtly to Harry. The baron ordered Bernhard to give one of the rifles to Harry.

"If he charges, step out of the way. He runs straight. Absolutely straight." Harry nodded.

His lie was perfect. No one could shoot, because the dogs made a close circle about him. The beast was barely visible anyway, so thick was the brush. The way he had run in, wounded, was blocked with young fir twisted out of shape by his violent entry. The bark had been scraped by a glancing blow of his tusks. These were the only part of him visible besides his snout which lay bleeding on a bed of twigs. The tusks were covered with a film of blood and foam. The beast snorted with rage and suffering.

A frantic dog jumped into the thicket; the boar swept him aside with his head and sat up on his hind quarters. The dog fell sideways, rolled, and was at the beast again. Another followed the first dog and leapt at the beast's head, had his stomach ripped and lay coughing blood in the densest part of the brush.

The baron advanced slowly towards the boar. He kept his rifle at port arms, ready to fire when he got near enough. Seeing the enemy approach, the boar got up in its hind legs, and crouched, devoured with wrath. He made a movement forward and his black snout, the long loops of hair about his ears, his yellow and ruddy tusks peered out of the thicket.

It was just at that moment that Lady Stephanie fired at the beast's back. The beaters set up an immediate cry and rushed forward on the thicket. Lady Stephanie's shot, missing the boar, had caught the baron in the upper leg. Von Kreilsheim fell to his knees holding both his hands to the wound, staring at the blood. At the same time, the boar, frightened by the shot, charged out of his lair. Everyone shouted at once, but the hounds were attacking the boar, reeling from his flanks as he charged through them, yapping; several shots rang out, and missed, plopping into young trees, breaking out the sap. Von Kreilsheim did not hear. Creeley was the only person

near him. He flung himself at the boar's flanks, wet with dogs' spittle, flattening one dog who had caught the beast's ear and hanging on, was being lofted along in the boar's charge. The blow tumbled the boar, and a single calm shot from Christoph shattered the beast's jawbone, and a second from Cruikshank broke into his brain-pan, and stopped the boar, in spasms, a shudder, then death, four feet from the baron.

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CREELEY HAD been severely bruised in the last steps on the boar's back; the sudden buckle and twist had pulled his knee out of joint. He lay, tended by Christoph and Bernhard, on the baron's bed in the master bedroom of the Lodge.

The party dissolved rapidly, without a feast. The boar, five hundred and fifty pounds, was brought by four bearers on a stout sapling, and hung in an ice-house behind the Lodge. The baron rested in one of the guest rooms.

By nightfall, the baron, Creeley, the doctor and Christoph were alone in the Lodge. The boar swung on a great steel hook behind the house; both doors had been left open to keep the smell from spoiling the other game hung and stored there. The dogs were locked in their kennels, but whined far into the night as the beast's blood dripped on to the sawdust floor, and the scent carried to them on a north wind that at dawn the next day brought them a narrow slanting fall of freezing snow.

WHEN HARRY returned from the baron's estates, he found the house in Pforzheim turned upside down, and Waxman and George Hartman, as though they were expecting him, sitting on the two remaining chairs in the living room. The heavy wooden filing cabinets from the first floor office loomed bulky and brown in the downstairs hall; the carpets had been taken up and the boxes had left long sharp rips in the wood where they had been dragged, scraping, towards the main door. Harry had forgotten how imminent their move was; the boar hunt seemed outside of time, and all their angers and jealousies seemed to belong to another day. It was a shock to see the glossy haired Waxman and Hartman with his heavy pipe sitting in the debris of so much order that had been only a few months in dissolving.

Harry dropped his musette bag by the door and shook Waxman's hand while George rose and offered Harry his seat.

"There you are," Waxman said, "I've been wondering. How many boars did you shoot?"

"The captain got hurt, did you hear?" Harry sat down in George's seat. He also hadn't realised how tired he was. "Thanks George. . . ."

"I heard," Waxman answered. "Stick around George," Waxman added, seeing Hartman heading for the door. "Was he hurt badly?"

"He'll live. . . ."

Harry told them the story briefly. Waxman listened, pulling on his lower lip. It was a few minutes before Harry realised how quiet Waxman was.

"Where's Halliday?" Harry asked.

"Out. . . . He took off with Irma. He ought to be back later, why?"

"The house is really empty."

"Are you going to get out?" Waxman abruptly asked Harry.

"Get out of what?" Harry asked.

"Out of here, friend. Are you going home?"

Harry nodded.

"Sent in my application just before leaving. Gollffing said on the phone there ought to be no trouble. I've only got another month or two to go anyway. . . ."

"I've got nearer twenty, you bastard. And I hope to God they aren't like the first sixteen!"

"What's the matter with him, George?" Harry asked.

"Out with it," George said to Waxman, relighting his pipe. "He wants your help, Harry. . . ."

"This won't take much effort. . . ."

"Out with it," George said.

"OK," Waxman answered. "But first let's have a drink. My stomach's already moved to Heidelberg!"

Harry shut his eyes and then rubbed them with the backs of his hands. His eyes felt grimy and heavy.

"What can I do for you?" Harry said, as Waxman put the drink in his hand.

"You can just tell me one thing," Waxman answered.

"When you first met the captain, did he ever speak to you about Baron von Kreilsheim?"

"Sure. . . ."

"And that was why you gave him the business at the party the other night?"

"He did the shooting off. . . ."

"That's right, and Gargallo tried to stop him. . . ."

"We all tried."

"Sure, but he went on. He went on most of the night."

Harry swallowed half the drink in one gulp. The house was cold, and they were sitting in almost total darkness. He could see, through the drawing room door, the four floor lamps by the bannisters, an ornamented brass army in a line.

"But up there you would think they hadn't known each other. Creeley was miles away in a completely different party."

"What did Creeley say about the baron when you two were down in Oberammergau?"

"He called him a great man, all sorts of things. I don't remember. I was under the weather that night. He talked about this boy who was a gun-bearer up there, Bernhard . . . what the hell, Waxman, I'm tired. . . ."

"He told you this boy's story: how he came to the Kaserne, how he nearly got raped, how the baron saved him, how. . . ."

"How do you know all that?" Harry swallowed the rest of the liquor. It relaxed him. He asked the question again, in a softer voice. "How'd you know that?"

"He told the story more than once . . . he told it to Porteous."

"And Larry told you? That doesn't sound like the Porteous I knew."

"No, Porteous didn't tell me. I told you he passed that story along more than once."

"Who did tell you then?"

"That story and a few others. You remember them arguing about who'd been there longer, Gargallo or him?"

"The poor bastard was drunk. . . ."

"He may have been drunk but the story had to come out. He had to tell it. He told it to five different people and it meant nothing. He told the sixth, and that's that. . . ."
Waxman snapped his fingers.

George lighted his pipe again and the match briefly shed light on the three of them, Waxman and Harry half facing each other on the high-backed wooden chairs that had once gone around the dining table, and George standing, just behind Waxman. Harry put his glass down. He knew the three of them were only waiting for the end, and here was Waxman, who had the end, drawing it out.

"Who was the sixth man?"

"The Greek," Waxman answered simply.

"The Greek?" Harry found himself sitting on the edge of

his chair. He made a great effort to relax. "They didn't say two words to each other the whole night."

"You didn't hear them, that's what you mean. He told Thanatopolous the whole story."

"And that was that?" Harry asked, snapping his fingers.

"Thanatopolous passed the word on to the CID. How's that for irony?"

"For Christ's sake, George, quit lighting your pipe!"

"The CID was here this morning with a warrant for his arrest."

"What for?" Harry asked, speaking slowly through his teeth. He heard Waxman's answer before Waxman answered. It took shape before him, wrapped up in a sort of wind, a bitter cold wind, and a sudden sharpness of breathing, as though the three of them had been suddenly transported to a high altitude. . . . You may meet Gunther von Kreilsheim some day, Creeley had said. He lives in the French Zone, near Waldkirch.

"For desertion," Waxman answered, draining his own glass and then lighting a cigarette from George's match. "You must have known, Harry. There was no Bernhard. . . ."

"I saw him. . . ."

"You saw Bernhard Freihausen. Sure, we know all about him. He was there all right. But there was no Bernhard in the real meaning of the story. That was Creeley, only his real name was Sempill, is Sempill. He was parachuted into Germany in the late summer of 1943 with the express purpose of finding out what was going on in Oberammergau. We had rumours that it was an SS training camp in espionage and Sempill's German was perfect. He had been brought up in the mountains there and had taught skiing. Only then he was presumed lost, because he never sent a single report. After the war, no trace of him was found, and he was presumed dead, and his family notified. Only he was still alive, and he enlisted in July 1944, in France, presenting official French papers, and claiming to be an expatriate caught in the

South of France by the war. At that time no one checked his story and he was quickly promoted, and that's the story up to date. Except that while he was at Oberammergau what he said happened to Bernhard happened to him. Von Kreilsheim knew perfectly well who he was, but kept him there because he was useful and because he was docile. And I suppose he got a certain amount of power as the baron's intimate and it must have been at a time when he tried to exert this power in some way . . . the story isn't very clear . . . that the baron let him go to Switzerland. That's all, though you might add the little bit about the story's having to come out. Creeley had to tell it. He still hadn't forgiven the baron and he was still jealous. . . ."

Harry had been listening in complete silence. Waxman told the story in all the flatness of its outline, having had no glimpse behind the bare facts. To Harry it was quite another story. Creeley was there in Harry's mind, in blue twill, ludicrous and heavy at the same time, munching on a half-dead cigar, curling his lips over its wetted end, and floating, floating down in white silk, in a tangle of shrouds, of cords to be pulled, swaying against the white fastnesses below. There was no story of Bernhard. So St. Peter was nobody's catamite, and Creeley just his own passion play? Fourteen kilometres, a voice mumbled on in Harry's brain, fourteen kilometres, can you run that far? What's the furthest you've ever run?

Then the voice was interrupted, and Harry saw, right in the dark circle before them, suddenly become a thicket, the lover leap at the boar's bloodied flank, and von Kreilsheim, clutching his leg, and then a last image, which was back at the Lodge, with General Bodkin presiding over the lover in the baron's bed, Creeley lying there, suddenly quite calm and nerveless, and himself again at last.

"I sent the CID away," Waxman said. "I told them Creeley had gone to Munich for the weekend. I wanted to know whether it was true."

"It's true," Harry answered. "I guess it's true. I can't see the man as a deserter, though. He should never have been anything else. He had nothing to desert *from*."

"Come on, Harry," Hartman said. "Walk me home and say good-bye."

Harry got up slowly.

"What are you going to do?" he asked Waxman.

"I'll let them find out where he is, if that's what you mean,"

Waxman answered.

"I guess that's what I meant," said Harry, who had been thinking of telling Creeley. But he saw, now that the three of them were out in the corridor, in the debris of moving, that Waxman and George had both read his thoughts, and had answered the question for him. He felt relieved and grateful.

Then George and he were at the foot of the garden path, and walking down the road together.

"I have a story to tell also," George said. "Larry asked me to tell you when you were going, but not until then. . . ."

"Was Porteous also the baron's lover?"

"No, but something like that. It is also a question of things not being what they look like."

They were at the top of the hill, and turning left to go up the road to the water-tower, opposite which George lived. In a sense, it was a last view of Pforzheim for Harry. The town lay below them in a pinkish November moon. It looked empty and Harry drank it all in as though he had never seen Pforzheim before: the three spires, the hills, the flats, the river, the Wasserturm behind them. He realised that as a town it had never been there for him, as a city of people; morning after morning he had woken up and looked from his window and seen an emptiness tinged with fog, an emptiness red, another under a black cloud, an emptiness white in mid-summer dust, and sometimes he had smelled the town, as on his first day, and after a while had smelled it no longer, and now the smell had gone with winter; he had never thought

of their little office on the hill, or of George, or of Mrs. Tisch, or of Metzinger and Fingar and Tupper as living there. And now suddenly he was asked to look at it as a city of half-living and half-dead, and it still looked like a void, because there was nothing to carry away from it, and whatever could have been carried away was already so deeply tucked into him that it had disappeared entirely.

"I'm tired, George. . . ."

"I know. You already said that. You don't really want to listen."

"It isn't the listening, you Chinaman, it's what you do with what you've heard."

"Then you have nothing to worry about. This you can do nothing about. But I don't think you'll jump to blame her like you would have when you arrived here."

"Blame who?"

"Mrs. Tisch. . . ."

"I? Blame her? I could never figure that out, George? She seemed to be the only person you really disliked. Why?"

"Because she wouldn't admit being in the same boat with the rest of us. She never had a husband, if you want to know the true story. Certainly not one from Ohio, and not a candy manufacturer. She drifted into Pforzheim just before the war, and got a job at Doblin's plant, and then she became his mistress. When he was promoted to colonel and sent off to Russia he was afraid for his business, and put her in charge. That's right, Harry, she cleaned him out, and when he came back from Russia she said it had all been destroyed in the bombing. And now Porteous has taken her."

"You and Waxman are full of answers tonight," Harry muttered.

"Nothing that you could not have found out if you had wanted to. . . ."

"All right," Harry said, anger and disgust bubbling inside him, "so I don't automatically suppose that everyone I meet is a lying bastard. . . ."

"She knew what she was doing," George said soothingly. "She took her risks. . . ."

"I don't hate her, if that's what you think, George. I hate myself. I suppose you know all about Speyer too, and the Greek, and whatever the hell we've been chasing around for months. Wrap it all up for me, George, will you? I'm on my way home, and I want to know all the answers."

George remained calm. They were in front of his house, and George had stopped and was digging into his pocket for his tobacco can.

"Do you want to come up?" he asked Harry.

"No, George, no thanks. I'm tired, as I said. I'll be around to say good-bye, if we're really going tomorrow. I don't believe anything any more. I might have to stay here another year."

"If you do," Hartman said, with his back turned to Harry, "listen to Gargallo, and stop worrying. You weren't in very deeply in all this. But he was. Your Arab was picked up the morning after the fight at the Club. He had been letting the Greek in on every move you made and he was no Arab anyway. Who's ever heard of a blond Arab? Perhaps he did it and perhaps he didn't. Gargallo does not know. But he was not a healthy person to have with you. He liked to shoot a gun. . . ."

Hartman didn't even turn to wave goodnight, and Harry took his time walking back down into Pforzheim. The night was cold and he pulled the lapels of his jacket in against his throat.

He had only one more stop to make to bid good-bye to Pforzheim forever, and that was at Mrs. Tisch's.

In ten minutes' time he stood on the landing outside her door, listening to her moving inside the apartment and wondering whether to knock. Then while he wondered she opened the door and stepped into the hall. She was dressed in an old and yellowed bathrobe, and her hair was up in

old-fashioned curlers. Her face was covered with cold cream, but she smiled at him with obvious pleasure.

She sat him down in the smaller of her two rooms, in a clutter of mementoes and a strong sweet smell of dog. To his surprise, she was crying.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"It's nothing. I got a letter from Larry."

"Do you want me to see it?" Harry asked.

"Yes, I would like you to read it, and I would like you to tell me why he doesn't say anything about it?"

"About what?"

"Here," she said, retrieving the letter from her bed in the next room, folding it back into shape and giving it to Harry.

"About my coming over. He doesn't say *anything*."

Harry read, and as he read, he stifled a desire to burst into laughter, and then stifled a desire, equally strong, to cry with Mrs. Tisch. In the letter Porteous described in detail how he had been stopped at Customs and how the Customs had taken away everything she had given him: watches, jewels, and so on. And there was no mention of her joining him. Harry did not have the cruelty to tell her that Porteous was lying, if she did not know already.

"Why doesn't he say anything?" she asked. "I don't care about the jewels. I don't care. But I loved him. . . ." Harry remained silent and she took the letter from his hand and threw it abruptly into a corner of the room.

"Do you remember the summer?" she asked suddenly, her tears suddenly dried up and her mouth forced back into a smile.

Harry remembered.

"You really hated me, didn't you?"

What could Harry answer? Even with all George had told him he couldn't hate her.

"I didn't hate you," Harry answered. "It may have looked that way. I was as anxious to please as the rest. . . ."

She offered him her cheek to kiss, pleased, even if she hadn't understood what he meant.

"You are going too," she said. "I shan't have any friends left. . . ."

Harry joked about it with her for a moment or two, and then started for the door, afraid that she would cry again.

"I've left a lot of me behind," Harry said, wondering what.

"If you see Larry," she began.

"I'll tell him. . . ." Harry answered.

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THREE WEEKS later Harry was sprawled across two seats of a second-class compartment of the Frankfort-Bremerhaven Express. This time, it was not his companions, a Dutch hydraulics engineer, a German employee of the *Neue Zeitung*, and two Americans, who were drunk, but Harry. And it was not schnapps on this last German night, though it was a bitterly cold December night, and the frost etched on the outside of the thick panes of glass was only seen dimly through the steam on the inside, though Harry had been offered a drink by both the German employee and one of the Americans, and though he wanted that drink very badly, both to warm him and comfort him. It was not schnapps, but departure, and the effort of thinking, and the desire to see the one out of the many, and the need to retain the faces that, already, were fading. Because he could not help thinking of it as a single year, almost day to day, as from one to the next, and believing that it should spring suddenly into focus, a focus as sharp as had been his that first night when, on the platform, he had watched the dogs and the conductor with his little boot merge into a kind of fear that had been nearly twelve months in the taking off.

But try as he could, neither persons nor places were

summoned, nor laughter, nor emotion, nor anything but the tedious cheat of the plush and buttons on which he lay, and the dirty grey of the floor at which he stared, and the slightly ridiculous pretexts of relaxation offered by the conversations of his fellow-travellers. And when he fell asleep, it was by an intimate relation of little pre-occupations and little realities that he found himself dreaming that he was in Gollffing's office, and the captain was dictating to him an absurd MOIC about himself, Harry, who seemed then to be someone quite different, referred to only as SUBJECT.

The MOIC would begin of course with its being the night of December 11th, 1947, on the Frankfort-Bremerhaven Express, Seat 6, Compartment 4, Car 401 . . . that was logical and clear, and he'd been through that hundreds of times, though never with so clear an image of Captain Gollffing sitting opposite him, tapping his fingers on the glass edge of his desk, and occasionally rifling through a bulky file of papers in his IN basket, all of which dealt with SUBJECT, Harry Carey. And the report itself, instead of detailing what happened, and what Special Agent Gollffing had seen, was a series of questions, to which Harry, under interrogation, answered always in the negative:

"Pforzheim? What reports?" Gollffing asked. "Nothing in Pforzheim. You've got a murder, right? Now, who killed your man. . . . Do you know?"

"No."

"Right. You don't know who killed Speyer."

"No."

"You don't know what happened to Larry Porteous. Not really. Whether he enjoyed it all?"

"No."

"You don't know what happened to Captain Creeley? Sempill?"

"No."

"Now. Let's look at what SUBJECT has done. SUBJECT began by breaking up a peaceful meeting, right?"

"No. . . ."

"After that, SUBJECT went down to Vogelsdorf and made a fool of himself with one Baron von Kreilsheim, right?"

"No."

"Then a wild goose chase after a Greek, called Thanatopolous, referred to above, right?"

"No. . . ."

"And didn't find out a damned thing, right?"

"No. . . ."

"But when SUBJECT came, SUBJECT was sure to find out everything. SUBJECT read all the old MOICs; SUBJECT went for walks about the town: SUBJECT despised Esslingen because it was well kept up; SUBJECT scorned me because we played badminton, and let me win, and went out on his own to make Germany, right?"

"No. . . ."

"But now SUBJECT has found out Mrs. Tisch is not Mrs. Tisch, and Creeley isn't Creeley, but Sempill, and Imala the Arab is not an Arab, and Germans aren't Germans, and we aren't what we are. . . ."

"No. . . ."

"SUBJECT investigated the meaning of ruin, knows about defeat, can tell victors from vanquished. . . ."

Gollffing went on in this vein for what seemed like hours, and when he'd finished they played badminton together, SUBJECT and Captain Gollffing, and the captain trounced him 15-0, 15-0. SUBJECT couldn't find the shuttlecock. It kept floating away, out of his reach. And all the time Gollffing kept talking:

"And SUBJECT made a last visit to the girl, Mieke Hochst, and tried to say good-bye, and climbed the hill, and went to her friend's room, Amalie Winkler, and an old man answered the door with an iron stove on his back. And the old man said the girls had both gone to Garmisch and were not coming back, right?"

"No. . . ."

"SUBJECT's cleared his conscience. SUBJECT is clean. SUBJECT's shaken the country off, right?"

And Harry's last protest was the weakest, because the Dutch engineer was shaking his shoulder and trying to get him to take his feet off the seat opposite him because the seat wasn't made to put his feet on.

In the argument that followed, they stopped at Kassel, and passed Kassel. Even if Harry had been looking out of the window, it is doubtful whether he would have observed anything of note there, except that the roof had been repaired, and the panes of glass restored along the platforms, and that there were now two tracks in service, and that several people got on and off. He probably would have seen very little anyway, even if he had looked, because this time he did not have a window seat, and the Dutch engineer would probably have objected to his opening the window, and the glass was dark and what lay on the other side was only dimly seen. Besides, the argument lasted until long after Kassel, with only Harry and the Dutch engineer much interested, though both insisted it was a matter of principle.

New Haven, August 1951—

Germantown, May 1954

